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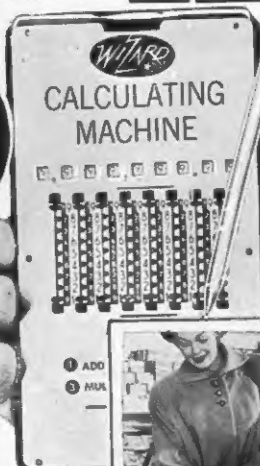
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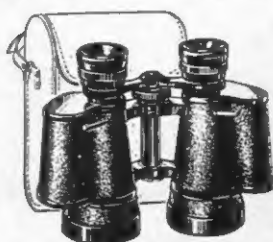
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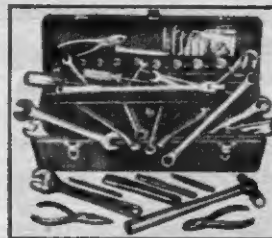


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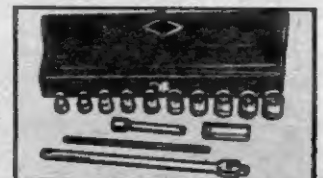
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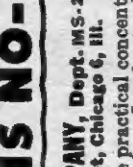
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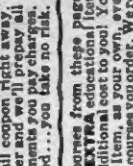
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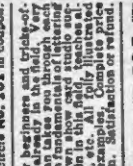
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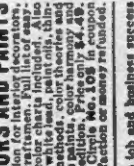
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Death was walking the hills that day, armed with the

blood-soaked whips of the Brotherhood of the 'Penitentes!'

I WAS IN TOWN the day they brought in the bodies. There were two of them, a man and a woman. And afterwards, I was one of the hundred or more interested parties and curiosity seekers who paraded through the morgue.

Later, I was sorry I went. It was a sickening sight. Their flesh was covered with raw welts, from which congealed blood had seeped into grey-brown scabs. And in among the welts were deeper cuts. Imbedded here and there, were thorns.

But worst of all were the gaping holes in their hands

I witnessed the

TORTURES OF THE DAMNED!

By JAY WYE



As the march halted by our hiding place, Consuela trembled, and pressed her body closer into my arms.

Illustrated by DICK BUDELIS

Released as safe by UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT!

**New doctor prescribed wonder drug
does away with all special diets!**



YOU MUST LOSE UP TO 49 POUNDS OR WE PAY YOU \$14.00!

Never before! Now an amazing wonder drug contained in RX-120 available without a prescription! A miracle drug prescribed and tested by thousands of doctors for over 10 years! Take off ugly fat without special diets, without habit-forming drugs, calorie counting, exercise, hunger pangs, massage! Your own doctor can tell you about this great new victory over obesity!

Of all the problems that have baffled medical science, obesity has been one of the toughest to lick! Think of it—there are 67 million overweight men and women in America and nothing sold without a prescription—until this electrifying discovery... has done any good! Do you wonder why the whole medical profession is enthused about this amazing development that has produced such astonishing results when tried by thousands of doctors... when tested with brilliant success on thousands of patients? Do you wonder why the United States Government was happy to release this formula as SAFE to sell over any drug counter in the United States WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION? This is tremendous news... news that can change your whole life, lengthen your life span, make you healthier, happier, more active, younger looking... slender and glamorous instead of "matronly."

Yes, RX-120 is the fabulous formula scientists have sought for since Dr. Nooden published his report on obesity back in 1906. Everything offered without a prescription since then has failed miserably—chewing gums, liquids, powders, crackers and hundreds of other so called reducing preparations. You can take your doctor's word for it, the wonder drug in RX-120 does work... it helps you take off up to 49 pounds. The most extensive clinic testing ever devoted to any drug is back of RX-120. There's never been such overwhelming medical evidence, such convincing PROOF! There are no "ifs, ands or buts" with this miracle drug. In fact, we are so positive we will pay you \$14.00 if you don't take off up to 49 pounds. Never before has any pharmaceutical company put such a daring guarantee in WRITING! The truth is no one could make such a guarantee because up to now there never has been a wonder drug sold over the counter that does such an amazing job of taking off unattractive excess weight!

HERE'S HOW YOU PROVE IT YOURSELF!

We don't have to tell you all the products you've wasted your money on trying to gain back your youthful figure are either frauds or too dangerous! You know this. Think back—you tried tablets that were supposed to put bulk in your stomach, you nibbled on cookies, ate crackers, swallowed liquid drugs, tried chewing gums, ate candies,

vitamin mixtures, went nearly out of your mind with calorie counters, pages of special diets! You got nervous, jumpy as a cat on risky drugs that many doctors condemned because of dangerous side effects! You'll be happy to hear all this is a thing of the past! Amazing new RX-120 contains such an advanced wonder drug it makes all other so called reducers old fashioned. RX-120 is an honest product. It really works! It's backed by more medical evidence than any other product ever sold to take off fat! No other effective product has proven so SAFE... that's why the United States Government released it as safe without a prescription in every city and hamlet in 48 states. It's true RX-120 will positively take off up to 49 pounds of excess weight caused by overeating or we'll pay you \$14.00. There's no doubt about it. Here's one product you don't risk one cent to PROVE! It really works!

Think of it! You must lose 9 pounds in 10 days... 18 pounds in 20 days... 27 pounds in 30 days... and 49 pounds in 8 weeks... or the medicine is FREE. Now here's our unheard of offer—read it carefully. You must lose the minimum number of pounds stated here with RX-120 or we'll give you back every cent you paid for each vial of RX-120 tablets!

PROOF POSITIVE!

You must lose 49 POUNDS in 8 weeks or we'll pay you \$14.00	You must lose 27 POUNDS in 30 days or we'll pay you \$7.00
You must lose 18 POUNDS in 20 days or we'll pay you \$5.00	You must lose 9 POUNDS in 10 days or we'll pay you \$3.00

Let's make this perfectly clear. If you take RX-120 for 10 days and don't lose at least 9 pounds, we'll send you a check for \$3.00. If you don't lose at least 18 pounds in 20 days, we'll send you a check for \$5.00. If you don't get rid of at least 27 pounds in 30 days, we'll send you a check for \$7.00. If you don't lose at least 49 pounds in only two months, we'll send you a check for \$14.00. Did you ever read an offer

The only reducing product where you see these words on the label!

"FOR TREATMENT OF OVERWEIGHT"

The law doesn't permit any other type of reducing product to print this on the label. Any government agent can tell you why. Because other types of reducing products just don't work. Unlike these other products, the miracle drug contained in RX-120 is a real medicine, a tested formula—made exclusively "to reduce excess weight." It really works! You don't have to resort to "fasting," "dieting," "exercise," eat special foods, count calories, follow a diet plan, exercise, eat special foods, diet! You'll be amazed at how fast you really take off fat! You may lose up to 49 pounds or we'll pay you \$14.00.



like this in your life? No—and you NEVER WILL — because only a good product that does everything claimed could be backed by such a guarantee!

HERE'S HOW RX-120 WORKS!

Unlike other reducing products you may have tried, new RX-120 works on an entirely different principle. It does four amazing things starting the very second you swallow the first tiny tablet—

- (1) It depresses your appetite.
- (2) It acts on your central nervous system; decreases your desire for food.
- (3) It acts in your intestinal tract—fights hunger contractions—teleglyphs a "stop signal" to your brain when you're tempted to overeat or indulge in between-meal snacks!
- (4) It makes the food you eat stay in your stomach for a longer period.

Just think what this means to you! With this amazingly SAFE formula—that does not have the terrible side effects of other reducing drugs—your body will oxidize fat automatically as you eat less food... excess weight will literally vanish into thin air! Yes, your weight goes down, down every single day. The exciting part is you don't have to torture yourself with starvation diets! You don't have to take food supplements, habit-forming drugs! You don't have to follow long winded reducing plans! You don't have to bore yourself counting calories! You don't have to exercise, spend miserable hour after hour in reducing salons! A whole new world will open up as you discover you can eat and enjoy the thousands of delicious, nutritious low calorie foods! You will live an active normal life—feel better than you ever did in your life—while you TRIM down to a glamorous figure in days, weeks! For now at last you can get RX-120 containing the new doctor tested wonder drug—without a prescription!

HELPS YOU RETRAIN YOUR EATING HABITS!

Doctors tell us that in most cases you are fat because you overeat. It's

as simple as that! You may not realize it but fat people have what amounts to an abnormal craving for food. YOUR appetite is aroused by the VERY smell and sight of certain foods. Be honest now. How many times have you started to reduce only to find you just can't stop or even CUT DOWN between-meal snacks? Over-eating soon becomes a deeply ingrained habit you can't break. "But why do I have this craving for food?" you ask. There are many reasons. Good food and lots of it may have been a family tradition. Some consider rich food a symbol of success.

What can you do about it? The answer has been a difficult problem to solve until the development of the wonder ingredient in RX-120. You know how hard it is to change long established habits. You know self-denial is not easy. You know how almost impossible it is to develop a will power of iron! But with new RX-120 you can change your habits—practically overnight. You can eat less without giving up the foods that taste so good. Down comes caloric intake—off comes excess fat. You don't have to rely on strong will power. You don't have to fight yourself every time you're tempted. Now you can take off that excess weight... without your ever being conscious of it!

GET YOUR RX-120 BEFORE IT IS RELEASED TO DRUG STORES!

Remember, RX-120 is not a diet, not a dull plan or regimen that tells you what to eat! It's not an ordinary

dietary supplement—it's a clinically tested, doctor approved medicine that has been PROVED effective when tried on over 2,000 overweight patients!... according to published reports. We'll be glad to send your doctor medical literature. RX-120 has been released as SAFE by the United States Government for sale without a prescription... but supply is limited. It won't be shipped to drug stores until November 15, 1958. But you can order direct from Wilson-Williams Inc., 273 Columbus Ave., Tuckahoe, N. Y.—if you act now! So hurry—order your RX-120 right NOW. Just fill out the coupon today and mail it while you're thinking about it. RX-120 is sent to you on a no risk 10-day trial.

Remember, you must lose 9 pounds in 10 days or we pay you \$3.00. You must lose 18 pounds in 20 days or we pay you \$5.00. You must take off 27 pounds in 30 days or you get \$7.00. You must PROVE you can lose up to 49 pounds in just 8 weeks or we pay you \$14.00. You have nothing to lose but ugly fat!

SEND NO MONEY! FREE 10 DAY TRIAL!

Fill out coupon below. Be sure to indicate the size of RX-120 you want as to each in your immediate! Start taking RX-120 the day it arrives. Check your scales every day. Keep a careful record of your weight losses! Remember, you must lose 9 pounds in just 10 days or we pay you \$3.00. You can just an easily take off 18 pounds, 27 pounds or up to 49 pounds depending on the number of days you take this new wonder drug! Don't forget, you must lose the minimum number of pounds claimed or you get every cent back. If you don't lose 9, 18, 27 or up to 49 pounds—money sent as proof of purchases. Yes, you must lose up to 49 pounds with NEW RX-120 or we will send you a check for \$14.00. Don't wait—check the quantity wanted, fill in the coupon today and mail it right now. You don't have to send any money—your first bottle will be mailed to you. But do it NOW!

WILSON-WILLIAMS INC.

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273 Columbus Ave., Tuckahoe, N. Y.

RUSH NO-RISK COUPON NOW!

Wilson-Williams Inc., 273 Columbus Avenue, Dept. 133 Tuckahoe, N. Y.

Rush my RX-120 immediately. I must lose pounds guaranteed by you above or you will pay me the amount specified.

☐ Rush 10 day supply. I will pay, postman only \$3.00 plus C.O.D. postage and handling.

☐ Rush 20 day supply. I will pay, postman only \$5.00 plus C.O.D. postage and handling.

☐ Rush 30 day supply. I will pay, postman only \$7.00 plus C.O.D. postage and handling.

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SAVE MUCH MORE! Postal rates have gone up! Enclose ☐ cash, ☐ check, or ☐ money-order for \$3.00, \$5.00 or \$7.00 and you save high postage and C.O.D. handling charges! Same money back guarantee.

Slowly, deliberately, in horrible cadence, the wet, red rawhide slashed down across scarred and lacerated shoulders.



and feet; big, empty gaps, their edges brown with a stain that resembled nothing more than rust.

Horrible as their bodies looked in death, their faces were even more frightening. The skin was drawn back tight against the cheekbones, and the mouths were open. Their tongues, swollen to three times normal thickness, protruded like gags between the teeth. The eyes were open, staring in such pain and terror that it was like looking into the depths of Hell!

The bodies were identified in time; a pair of tourists who had passed through Santa Fe only a few days earlier. They had been reported missing when they failed to return to their hotel after a day's sightseeing in the hills.

It was a nine-day wonder. There were many wild rumors, but it was never solved. And after a while, the crime was completely forgotten—well, almost forgotten.

I recall talking to Ysidro, the little old man who worked as porter in the Bruns General Hospital, where I was serving out my time in the Army. Half Indian, half Spanish, he didn't appear to be very interested. He shrugged in total unconcern.

"Who knows," he mumbled. "Much happens in the mountains. Thousands have died there in the past and more will die in the future. The cougar, the snake, the great rat, the vulture. One kills, the others feast. But it is over. Why worry about the dead?" He turned and shuffled away, still mumbling under his breath.

That was a year ago, when I first came to Santa Fe as a raw recruit, straight from basic. I'd been drunk when I went to the morgue, but the sight was enough to keep me off the stuff for nearly six months.

But now I had other things to think about, namely Consuela. She was Santa Fe in a nutshell, a mixture of everything and everyone who had ever passed through the fabulous old town. Part-Indian,

part Spanish, part Anglo-Saxon—*part Tigress*—and all as female as any man could hope to find, she took up not only all my free time, but haunted my mind like a drug, as well.

What was she like? Well, it must have been Consuela of whom the Persian poet, Sa'adi, was thinking when he wrote, "Her face was like a breath of incense; her breasts like melons ripening in the sun; her skin was cool and soft as the down on a fresh-plucked peach." The verse goes on for another forty lines or so, but you get the idea.

She was a waitress in one of the small restaurants in town, and when we hit it off right away, I didn't waste any time. We had some wild times together. . . .

THE WEEK-END WAS HER idea. The little adobe hut up in the mountains belonged to her cousin, she informed me. We could be completely alone up there.

The ride was breathtaking. It was March, and where the sun shone it was warm and bright. But in the shady spots there was a chill. Snowy patches lay in the shadows, and the distant mountain peaks still wore their winter coats of snow.

The road was well-paved at first, but the further we drove from town, the rougher it got. When we reached the hills it changed to a rutted trail, and I was glad enough to let Consuela do the driving. She was familiar with the country and knew how to navigate the terrain.

The trail crawled sideways up the mountain, running diagonally and then making a hairpin turn to go the other way and rise a few hundred feet more up the steep slope. On one stretch we were riding a narrow shelf. On the left, Consuela's side, there was a sheer cliff, so close I could have reached out across her and touched it. On the other side, my side, there was a straight drop. A slip of the wheel would have

(Continued on page 68)

Clothed all in black, the carving of a skeleton grinned out of a ghastly mask!

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SAMPLE PUZZLE

The Correct Answer
Is ONE Of These
Gold Rush Names!

- ☐ Jesse James
- ☐ Bret Harte
- ☐ Mark Twain
- ☐ John Adams

T W A I N

THIS SAMPLE PUZZLE IS ALL WORKED OUT FOR YOU

SEE HOW MUCH FUN IT IS TO SOLVE!

This sample puzzle, as all our puzzles, has clues to help you reach the answer. First, study the cartoon. Here it shows the cowboy saying MARK, and he also mentions the word WAY. The letter "T" and the letter "N" appear. What else can the answer be but MARK TWAIN?



PUZZLE NO. ONE

The Correct Answer
Is ONE Of These
Gold Rush Names!

- ☐ Billy Sunday
- ☐ Robert Fulton
- ☐ Kit Carson
- ☐ Cotton Mather

K I T C A R S O N

HERE IS YOUR FIRST PUZZLE!

Write Your Answer In Coupon Below • Mail It NOW!

Look at the two puzzles on this page for a few moments. Can you solve them? You should be able to... because there are no tricks or gimmicks to trip you up. Nothing but a straightforward, honest challenge to your skill and common sense! Yes, skill and common sense are all you need to solve the puzzles in this wonderful GOLD RUSH Game... offering you loads of exciting action, hours of fun and pleasure... and a chance at any one of 150 great cash awards totaling \$100,000.00! There's no red tape when you enter... no long wait for payment of prizes—this is a quick action contest!

All prizes paid promptly in full. Enter now! And make yourself eligible to win a fabulous promptness bonus award of as much as \$5,000.00 along with the First Prize of \$50,000.00... a grand first prize total of \$55,000.00... one of the largest cash first prizes ever offered in puzzle contests!

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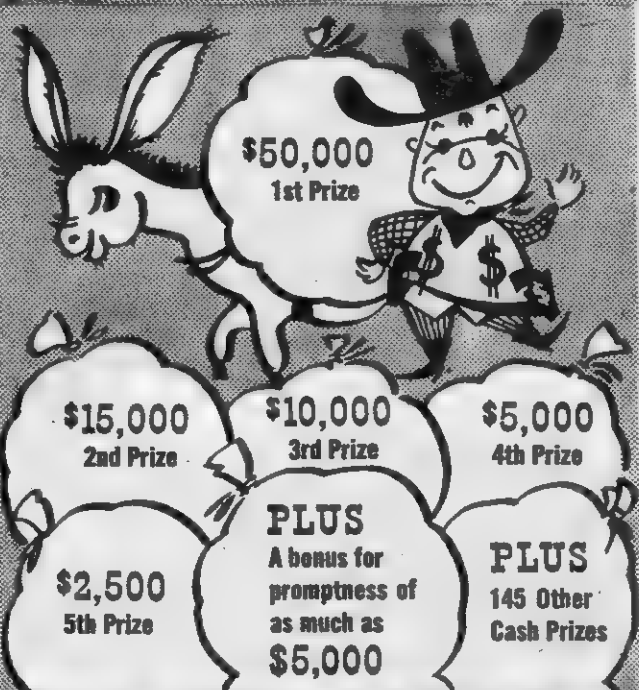
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BOX 110 GLEN COVE, N. Y.

their orders read: Don't Come Back Alive!

SUICIDE SUB

The most incredible mission of the war!

By ERIC WILLIAMS

A battered hulk, the enemy craft slid to her death.



Like a dying tarantula, the legs of Jap shipping were gradually shriveling. But now the Tang had to go to the heart of the web!

THE BLEAK WATERS OF Formosa Straits heaved ominously that cold morning as the USS *Tang* plowed westward at half speed. After weeks of fighting in the far western Pacific, the grim nemesis of Japanese shipping plainly showed the effects of war. She was badly in need of paint, and her engines needed overhauling. The brave officers and crew were war weary—their faces haggard. In one year, they had sent over 150,000 tons of Jap shipping to the bottom. But there were still eleven torpedoes on board this trip . . . it would be a shame to return to Pearl with them.

From the Exec officer down, all personnel of *Tang* would have followed their CO into the jaws of Hell. Captain O'Kane was well-known throughout the Pacific Submarine Command—a tireless, fearless officer. Never one to avoid personal risk, he was topside with the deck-gun crew that morn-

ing when Hell broke loose. He was right there.

Visibility had closed in to two thousand yards, when a southwesterly wind swept in a curtain of fog. The Captain scanned the horizon with his glasses. Then the deck speaker clicked on noisily.

"Radar contact, Captain!"

The skipper shoved his glasses into a leather case and listened.

"Small enemy convoy dead ahead, Sir! Distance about eighteen hundred yards. Heavily loaded tanker and large transport. Two destroyer escort. Speed about twelve knots."

Before he reached the open conning tower hatch, O'Kane knew that his crew was ready and waiting. His crisp command ordered full speed ahead. The great submarine lurched forward, her screws churning wildly. *Tang* was going to attack boldly—from a surface position. Hugging close and low in

4 Skin Specialists' Secrets that erase Acne Pimples Blackheads, Oily Skin

Amazing NEW combination treatment



"7 DAY CLEAR"
BIG SAMPLE PACKAGE \$1.00

Takes only 30 seconds to use each of the miraculous 4 skin treatments in the "7 Day Clear" sample package. Think of it! All yours for only \$1 if you act now!

Here's the most startling news ever published for you millions who suffer terrible embarrassment, perhaps even permanent scars from acne pimples, blackheads and oily skin. Four of the most amazingly effective skin treatments prescribed by dermatologists have been released to you in one big sample package... all without a prescription! Yes, now at last you can get a complete 4-way treatment... that's right... a complete 4-way treatment that is at least 75% more effective than any old hat "one way" method you may have used—hopelessly trying to rid yourself of these stubborn skin conditions! With this new 4-way combination treatment you put an end to embarrassment instantly... for it **HEALS** as it **HIDES** your ugly blemishes!

Most amazing of all, you don't risk one penny to PROVE the miracles this new shortcut to clearer skin will perform... impossible to achieve with just one product!

Even if you decide to keep all four of these formulas prescribed by skin doctors... you only pay \$1 for handling charges! You must see a tremendous improvement the very first day or your dollar will be returned immediately! You must see a clearer skin in 7 days or we pay you... we'll send you a check for \$2. No pharmaceutical company making a product that's sold with or without a prescription would dare make such a claim! The reasons are obvious: you just can't cover up, you just can't clear up your blemishes with one product! Ask any dermatologist—he'll tell you!

Here's Why We Make This Unheard Of Offer!

The truth is every man and woman in the United States has suffered with teenage trouble, at some time in his or her life! Acne pimples alone attack 80% of boys and girls to their great social embarrassment and discomfort. That's why we make this amazing limited offer to introduce you to the most trusted, the most widely accepted, the most effective 4-way treatment ever offered. We want to pro-

actively GIVE this generous medicine chest containing four wonder formulas to the first 100,000 men and women who write in... because we know you will be wildly enthusiastic with the results you get in as little as 7 days and you will tell others who are afflicted with these embarrassing skin conditions! In a short time, this 4-way skin regimen will be available through drug and department stores at four or five times the price you pay! So act now.

FIGHTS SKIN BLEMISHES FOUR WAYS!

The name of this truly amazing 4-way medicated treatment is called "7 Day Clear"... it goes to work instantly to help clear up your blemishes while it covers up your blemishes... in as little as seven days! IT TAKES LESS THAN 30 SECONDS TO USE EACH TREATMENT! Here's what you do...

(1) First you use "7 Day Clear" Medicated Soap containing wonderful "colloidal sulphur" prescribed by skin specialists. It softens and dissolves dead skin cells, cleanses excess oils, purifies deep down, helps DRY UP unsightly blemishes. You'll love its rich gentle foaming lather.

(2) Second, you use amazing "7 Day Clear" Medicated Blemish Cream. It's greaseless, stainless, pleasant to use. This miraculous invisible cream contains "Allantoin" which proved effective in 108 out of 109 stubborn skin conditions tested! It "permeates the pores," soothes, heals, unplugs clogged pores, helps CLEAR UP that unsightly skin!

(3) Next, you use the astonishingly effective "7 Day Clear" Medicated Lotion. It's a bacteriostat, does away with pus-forming germs and bacteria, eliminates scaly residue, treats infected pustules, closes pores... safeguards against spreading infection!

(4) Last, you use the incredible "7 Day Clear" Blemish Stick! This is naturally flesh colored—is impossible to detect even in glaring sunlight or under 150-watt bulbs! You "cover up" those ugly blemishes with the flick of a finger! It **HEALS** as it **HIDES**! And boys and men can use it without anyone discovering their secret... regardless of whether they are light or dark complexioned!

That's all there is to it! You can be certain the "7 Day Clear" foursome will give you the results you've always wanted! This proven Therapy helps rid you of acne pimples, blackheads, whiteheads, and other externally-caused skin blemishes FASTER, more COMPLETELY than any single remedy you've ever tried! Most important of all, it **HEALS** AS IT **HIDES**! The very first second you try this amazing combination treatment you: (1) make sure that embarrassing skin eruptions VANISH FROM SIGHT! You'll have renewed confidence, step out with the wonderful feeling that goes with a CLEAR complexion!

HEALS as it HIDES

A big improvement first day or MONEY BACK!
A clearer skin in 7 days or WE PAY YOU!

(2) you'll know the four most effective healing formulas prescribed by dermatologists are at work "outside and deep inside" to help clear up your skin... in a matter of hours, days!

Get rid of blackheads and pimples... clear up unsightly eruptions with the miraculous "7 Day Clear" Combination treatment that "HEALS as it HIDES." Remember, you must see a big improvement the first day or money back! You must see a clearer skin in as little as 7 days or we pay you \$2.00 for filling out the coupon below!

DRAMATIC RESULTS IN ONE DAY OR MONEY BACK!

That's the real truth! You must actually see a big improvement in your complexion after one 24-hour treatment with the four miracle formulas available to you in the "7 Day Clear Big Sample Package"... offered to you at practically cost... only \$1.00 plus 25¢ postage. What's more, you must see a clearer skin in as little as 7 days or we send you a check to reward you for your faithful use of this amazing combination skin treatment. It's results that count—not promises that can't be backed up! We know if you use "all four" of the "7 Day Clear" products—the soap, the cream, the lotion, the blemish stick... you'll be wildly enthusiastic with the results you get! Don't put it off! Do it now! Just send your name and address today to HealthAids, Inc., Dept. H-1, 114 E. 32 St., N. Y. 16, N. Y. Hurry—this special introductory offer will be withdrawn in thirty days.



RUSH NO-RISK COUPON TODAY!

HealthAids, Inc., Dept. H-1, 114 E. 32 St., N. Y. 16, N. Y.

Please rush to me the 7 Day Clear Medicated Sample Package as shown here. I enclose just \$1 plus 25¢ to cover postage and handling. This is the complete cost. There is no other payment. If I don't see a big improvement the first day you will refund my money. If I don't see a clear skin in just 7 days you will pay me \$2.00.

Enclosed in _____ Cash _____ Check _____ Money order

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____



**Hugging the water,
unseen, *Tang* covered
the distance. Her
formidable snout
pointed directly
at the Jap tanker.
Suddenly, all hell
broke loose!**

the water, unseen by the enemy, she covered the distance to the target. Then slowing to a mere creep, her formidable snout pointed directly toward the big tanker! All was in readiness for the first blow . . .

"Bearing—mark!"

"Zero zero eight!"

"Set!"

"FIRE!" Then again, **"Fire!"**

The men of the *Tang* waited tensely . . . listening . . . Suddenly, there was a devastating roar, and a second later, another!

The enemy ship ripped asunder. Her cargo of aviation gasoline exploded into a huge ball of fire, blanketing the early dawn with an orange shroud. Then, within seconds, the shattered Japanese hull was engulfed by the sea. Even before the sound of the explosion had faded away, *Tang* swung around. Quickly, she pointed her stern tubes toward the transport, which was already zig-zagging away. However, the maneuver was of little use. *Tang* was like a determined lady of vengeance! Two more torpedoes shot forth, striking the transport near the stern. The heavy steel of the outer bulkhead was crushed like egg shell! Hundreds of tons of water poured in on the wounded and dying Japanese crewmen.

DICK O'KANE BECAME so engrossed in watching the dying transport, that for a moment he forgot the two remaining destroyers, some five hundred yards distant. Abruptly, he realized that they were swinging around to enter the fight. Even as he watched, white puffs of smoke belched from one enemy ship! Shell bursts pocked the water—close to the *Tang*!

There were two things a submarine would normally do under the circumstances. Either run for it, or submerge and remain so until things quieted down. But *Tang* had never run from the enemy, and never would. Already, O'Kane's mind was working at top speed.

Observing the close battle formation of the two enemy ships, the skipper decided on a bold, split-second maneuver. Quickly, he briefed the helmsman and others on dashing *in between* the two Japanese warships. They would be forced to withhold their fire, for fear of hitting each other. If the plan succeeded, *Tang* would sink at least one of them before the Nips regained their wits.

The Japanese officers had fully expected the American sub to turn tail—the possibility of a lone submarine winning a surface battle against two destroyers at close range was an impossibility! But they didn't know O'Kane and his crew.

Suddenly, the Japs became frantic! The big sub was heading directly toward them, fairly splitting the water as it thundered closer!

O'Kane's plan to wedge his ship between the two destroyers might have succeeded—but to the Japanese, the thing seemed like a *Kamikazi* tactic.

There was hurried signaling between the destroyers, and then, like two confused ducks on a mill pond, they went scurrying away, *Tang* in hot pursuit. O'Kane's plan had been foiled, but as it turned out, the tables were turned. Now the Japanese were the pursued!

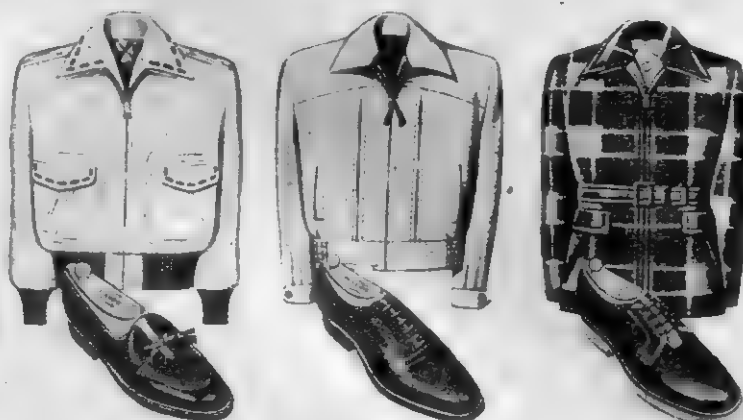
Relentlessly, *Tang* kept squarely astern of one of the destroyers. Such a position offered little danger, since the enemy ships were not equipped with stern guns. Of course, there were always depth charges. But the *Tang's* (Continued on page 64)

LOOK! Jacket & Shoe COMBINATIONS PAY YOU **BIG MONEY** Every Month! Just 3 Sales Daily Earn You up to \$660 a Month!



Write Today
For Free
Starting Kit!

New miracle **INSULATED INTERLINING** keeps you warm at below zero temperatures. Same type as used in U.S. Army Coldbar suit! Thousands of unconnected **AIR CELLS** between two layers provide **DEAD AIR SPACE** insulation—keeps cold air out, holds body heat in, is light, comfortable and non-bulky.



We Furnish Everything **FREE!**

Here's an exciting new idea that pays you double profits every sale! Now you can sell famous Mason Shoes . . . and Jackets to match! This tested "2-in-1" plan gives you two sales on a single call. Think of the things you can do with all the money you'll make this easy way!

Take orders for just three of these fast-selling combinations a day . . . and you earn up to \$660 a month! Here are just a few of the combinations folks buy from you so fast:

• Now-famous *Insulated Jacket* and *Leather Boot* Combination . . . same type Subzero Insulation as U.S. Army Coldbar Suit! • Horsehide leather jacket lined with real sheepskin . . . and extra-comfortable air-cushioned work shoe, also lined with warm fleece! • Smart, luxurious Palomino Leather Jacket . . . matching air-cushioned Tassel slip-on Moccasins . . . today's rage! • New Reversible Nylon-Rayon Jacket . . . with genuine Shell Cordovan Leather Oxford (not illustrated). (These combinations pay you up to \$9.50 profit per sale!) We'll put you in business *immediately* by rushing a complete Sales Outfit **FREE!** And . . .

YOU GET STEADY REPEAT ORDERS!

• You show a *selection* no store can match! Over 195 dress, sport, work shoe styles for men, women . . . plus a complete line of jackets . . . even raincoats! • You can fit almost *everybody*, because of our amazing range of sizes (2½-15) and widths (extra-narrow AAAA to extra-wide EEEE)! • You carry no stock—yet you're never "out" of a size, style, or width! With our huge stock (over a quarter million pairs of shoes) to draw on, you give customers what they want! • You feature our exclusive Velvet-ox foamy-soft *Air-Cushion* innersole . . . a blessing for men and women who spend long hours on their feet. Working men, women swear by this important comfort feature! Mason Shoes are Nationally Advertised . . . are well-known! Folks buy in complete confidence . . . know they're getting "tops" in value! . . . They really appreciate this convenient, leisurely way of "shopping" for shoes at home or where they work. Saves time . . . saves shopping around . . . and they save money! Right now—with Mason sales far higher than ever before in all our 11 years—is the best time to start! To get your new Mason Starting Business Outfit including the Mason "Miracle" Line for men and women and featuring amazing Insulated Jackets, shoes . . . Silicone-tanned shoes that shed water . . . Shoe-Jacket combinations . . . many other fast-selling money-makers . . . mail coupon *today!* We'll rush your **FREE** Starting Business Outfit with *everything* you need to make exciting double profits from your first hour!

Do You Want This Kind of EXTRA Cash?

Here's actual *proof* of the money you can make in your Mason business, taken from hundreds of signed testimonials on file at our factory. Most of these successful men had no selling experience . . . yet all made handsome, extra incomes . . . without investing a single cent! Wouldn't you like cash profits like these?



Earns \$93.55 in 4 hours!

"On June 5th, I sold 38 pairs of shoes from 6:30 P.M. to 10:30 P.M. earning myself \$93.55 in commissions." J. Kelly, New York. (While this is exceptional, it shows what an ambitious man can do.)



Earnings Financed Vacation!

"I've used my profits to pay off the final notes on a farm I own and finance a two-weeks' vacation in North Carolina for my family." T. Worley, Michigan



Adds Greatly to Pension!

"I know there must be many men like myself who would like to add to their pensions to gain the extra things of life. One forenoon I made a net profit of \$21.75!" C. Mason, Michigan.



Averages \$80 extra a week!

"I have made more money since I started this business than in all my past life. My average extra earnings have been over \$80 a week." C. Tuttle, California.

MASON SHOE MFG. CO., Dept. F-277
CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN

SEND FOR **FREE** SALES OUTFIT!

MASON SHOE MFG. CO., Dept. F-277
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Please rush my complete Mason Shoe & Jacket Starting Business Outfit **FREE** and postpaid including everything I need to start earning big money from my first hour!

Name

Address

Town State

ROYAL JELLY, the Queen Bee's Special Food...ITS SECRET OF PROLONGED LIFE!

JENASOL introduces **DOUBLE ROYAL JELLY POTENCY**

EACH AND EVERY JENASOL CAPSULE NOW CONTAINS
50 MCG. PURE NATURAL ROYAL JELLY IN SINGLE-STRENGTH
100 MCG. PURE NATURAL ROYAL JELLY IN DOUBLE-STRENGTH
AT NO INCREASE IN PRICE WHATSOEVER!

Compare The JENASOL Formula For POTENCY, PURITY, and PRICE

Leading National Magazines, Newspapers, Syndicated Columnists, Medical Journals, and Report from Medical Congress indicate the benefits of ROYAL JELLY, a "living" high energy food.

Doctors Report "Miracle" Royal Jelly May Change Your Whole Life!

How would you like to awaken one morning and find yourself possessed with a marvelous sense of "well-being," full of New Pep and Vitality? Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could feel increased vigor and enjoy a "new lease on life?" Now... Scientists say this may happen to you!

Royal Jelly May Mean "New Life" After 40

Reports from Europe tell of an 80 year old Gentleman whose physical condition would make a 50 year old envious. The man regularly partakes of Royal Jelly. According to a book published in England, when Russian Officials sent questionnaires to all the Centenarians (people over 100 years old) in the Soviet Union, more than half of them turned out to be beekeepers.

From France and Germany come amazing Scientific Reports of outstanding results obtained with Royal Jelly. One French Authority writes of women over 40 feeling increased sexual vitality and of a wonderful feeling of "youth and well-being" that resulted from continued use of Royal Jelly.

At this moment, in Leading Universities, Scientists and Nutritionists and Medical Doctors are doing extensive work to determine the exact role that Royal Jelly may play in Your Sex Life, Your Health and Your Emotional Condition. These researchers are especially interested in its effects on those who have passed middle age. They are working on Royal Jelly because this rare NATURAL FOOD has been indicated to contain remarkable Energy and Sex Factors.

Doctor Paul Niehans, famous Swiss Surgeon and experimenter with Hormones says: "ROYAL JELLY is an activator of the glands"... Dr. Niehans discovered that many minor disabilities which bother millions of people such as tiredness, irritability, headaches, insomnia, physical and spiritual convulsions, were easy to treat with the Cellular Therapeutics of the Secretion of the bees which we call Royal Jelly.

Jenasol RJ Formula 60 contains pure, natural Wheat Germ Oil (Vitamin E)

Swallow one CONCENTRATED JENASOL RJ FORMULA 60 capsule daily. They combine 8 important and essential vitamins as well as the miracle food of the Queen Bee. This capsule dissolves instantly, releasing the super forces of Royal Jelly which go to work immediately and reinforce and healthfully strengthen your own natural functions which may have become deficient.

Effects can be felt more quickly with the double potency SUPER-STRENGTH FORMULA—but satisfactory results are MONEY BACK GUARANTEED with either formula. (The price of ROYAL JELLY has been recently quoted at \$500.00 per ounce.)

Now You May Benefit from ROYAL JELLY... the "ELIXIR of YOUTH" of the Queen Bee

Two years ago, the world-famous French Nutrition Expert, Bernard Desouches wrote a book praising Royal Jelly as a Life Prolonger and Extraordinary Stimulator of Sexual Virility of the Queen Bee. At present, Doctors and Scientists from many countries in the world, say that Royal Jelly has proved to be a potent factor in matters relating to sexual virility and size and growth of animals.

Here Are Some of the Symptoms of Approaching Old Age which Make Men and Women over 40 feel devitalized and "played out" before their time:

• "Human Dynamos" slow down amazingly • Dizziness • Weak feeling • Vague aches and pains • Listless, "don't care attitude" • Lacks recuperating power • Fatigues easily • Fails to get rest from sleep • Sexual weakness • Loss of mental efficiency and ability • Unable to make simple decisions.

The Best Laboratories of Europe gave the Doctors of the 2nd International Congress of Biogenetics a great surprise when they confessed that their famous Medical Cream for the skin was prepared with Royal Jelly. The Doctors all knew that with this cream sagging breasts were raised and mammary glands of women were activated.

ROYAL JELLY Wins Approval Before Congress* of 5,000 Doctors

The men of Medical Science who have experimented with Royal Jelly, claim that Royal Jelly will perform the function of INCREASING MEN'S WOMEN'S WANING POWERS. Jenasol R. J. Formula 60, in the opinion of these reputable physicians removes any possible danger for the layman in the use of these powerful, concentrated nutritional extracts. This is the latest and possibly the greatest advance in the history of Medical Science. This combination, created under the strict supervision of a Registered, Licensed Pharmacist, and Medical Doctor, named "Jenasol R. J. Formula 60," makes the use of these amazing elements perfectly safe.

Every man and woman who feels "old" and "played out" before their time should seriously consider the use of "Jenasol R. J. Formula 60" to increase their pep and energy.

Royal Jelly Reported to Help Those Suffering From:

Mental Depression... Loss of Appetite... Sexual Weakness... Digestive Disturbances Headaches... Decreased Vigor... Nervousness... Aches and Pains... Irritability.

MEDICAL RESEARCH

We have listed below some of the extensive Medical and Laboratory research that has been done with Royal Jelly:

Many authorities still dispute the efficacy of Royal Jelly while others consider it a potential Boon to Mankind.

* Dr. de Pomiade, 2nd International Congress of Biogenetics, Baden-Baden, Germany: April 5, 1956.

* Dr. Maurice Mathias, Pasteur Institute of Tunisia, October, 1952.

* Cowdry's Problem of Aging, Thomas S. Gardner. (Reprinted from Journal of Gerontology, Vol. 8, No. 3, July, 1953.)

* Analyses of Royal Jelly and Pollen, Nevin Weaver and Kenneth A. Kuiken (Technical Contribution, No. 1485 Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.)

* Longevity Factors in Royal Jelly, Thomas S. Gardner. (Reprinted from Journal of Gerontology, Vol. 3, No. 1, January, 1948.)

We make no claims for ROYAL JELLY. We have merely accumulated reports that have been made as a result of experimentation and research by Doctors, Scientists and Nutritionists in many parts of the world.

LEADING MEDICAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND, FRANCE AND GERMANY: Attest that ROYAL JELLY is one of the richest Natural sources in the treatment of vitamin and nutritional deficiencies... that hogs and guinea pigs fed with Royal Jelly live 20 to 30% longer... chickens fed with Royal Jelly double their egg output.



Offices in: Canada, Germany, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Cuba, Japan.



Observations by Doctors of the Medical Congress Who Took Royal Jelly and Observed its Use Directly



• Royal Jelly alleviates suffering of men and women in their critical years in a sensational manner.
 • Royal Jelly acts on weakened, tired eyes, giving instantly a sensation of new light.
 • Feeling of tiredness disappears immediately.

• Royal Jelly gives a feeling of increased sexual drive and energy, especially to men and women over 40.

• Glandular studies may lead to new hope for men and women.

• Royal Jelly produces a pleasing state of relaxed well-being and eases tension.

DISCOVERER OF INSULIN Dr. Frederick Banting

"The most complete Scientific Report on Royal Jelly was prepared under the direction of Dr. Frederick Banting.

"TEXAS A & M COLLEGE has been conducting experiments on Royal Jelly..."

"PROFESSOR G. F. TOWNSEND of ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE is resuming research on Royal Jelly..."

"DR. T. H. MCGAVACK has agreed to conduct experiments in Longevity with human beings fed Royal Jelly..."

Life May Begin Again After 40 as Queen Bee's Natural Food Rebuilds Man's Vitality and Drive

Royal Jelly is totally unlike honey, and has baffled scientists since the 1700's. In 1894, some of the mystery was dispelled when Leonard Borda, a French scientist, discovered that Royal Jelly is secreted by special glands located in the heads of worker bees whose job is to nurse the Queen.

Intrigued by the strange longevity and extraordinary sexual powers of the Queen Bee, leading scientists have been trying to discover the Secret Factor in Royal Jelly that so benefits the Queen Bee.

It is not surprising that Royal Jelly has attracted Medical Attention throughout the world... Here is the substance, the sole diet of the Queen Bee in which lies the secret of the difference between her and the rest of the hive. For the Queen lives to 6 years, whereas the 20 to 40 thousand worker bees and the few hundred drones live but a few short months. The Queen Bee larva looks like all the rest, including those of the female worker bees. But only SHE is fertile, producing some 400,000 eggs annually.

Her food is ROYAL JELLY, secreted from the glands of the worker bees. The ingredients are nectar and pollen, plus honey, combined in a mysterious way by Nature to make up the "miracle food" ROYAL JELLY...

Order ROYAL JELLY with Complete Confidence

No Doctor's Prescription necessary. If for any reason JENASOL fails to satisfy you, your money will be refunded in full. Try it at our expense!... JENASOL CO., World's Largest Producers of Royal Jelly Products... serving over a QUARTER A MILLION PEOPLE—in the U.S.A. and 45 foreign countries: 22 E. 17th St., Dept. LG-12 New York 3, N.Y.

Men and Women Agents Wanted. Write for Free Literature.

DOCTORS: Write on your letterhead for Clinical Samples

JENASOL CO., 22 East 17th St., Dept. LG-12 New York 3, N.Y.

Please send me the complete JENASOL R. J. FORMULA Plan as marked below: I enclose \$....., cash, check or Money Order. The very first capsules must help me to feel better or my money will be refunded promptly and without question. (I save up to \$2.00 by sending payment with order. JENASOL Co. ships postage paid.)



- ☐ Send 1 Single Strength 50 Mgm. Royal Jelly 30-Day Supply... \$ 5.00
- ☐ Send 1 Double Strength 100 Mgm. Royal Jelly 30-Day Supply... \$ 7.50
- ☐ Send 1 Single Strength 50 Mgm. Royal Jelly 60-Day Supply... \$ 9.00
- ☐ Send 1 Double Strength 100 Mgm. Royal Jelly 60-Day Supply... \$12.50
- ☐ Send 1 Single Strength 50 Mgm. Royal Jelly 120-Day Supply... \$15.00
- ☐ Send 1 Double Strength 100 Mgm. Royal Jelly 120-Day Supply... \$20.00

Name

Address

City Zone State

☐ I enclose \$1.00 deposit, please ship C.O.D.

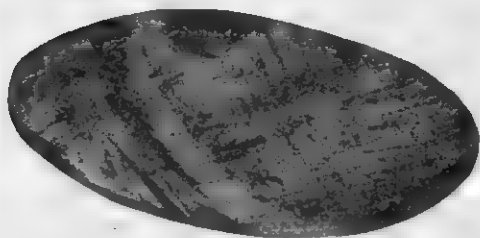
ALL ORDERS RUSHED TO YOU IN PLAIN WRAPPER



The JUNGLE HAREM of MIKE MALLOY

By FREDERIC LAMPRON

Illustrated by BOB CORREA



TURN PAGE ▶



When he was well enough to torture, Mike was tied to stakes and spread-eagled on the beach, surrounded by the taunting, Polynesian maidens.



THE JUNGLE HAREM OF MIKE MALLOY

ALL SEVEN OF MIKE MALLOY'S jungle girls stood naked in the tropical moonlight. Their bodies were lushly ripe, the color of creamed coffee. They stood patiently in a line, outthrust breasts dabbed with vermillion, as Mike leaned against a coconut palm, quietly smoking a cigar, trying to remember what day of the week this was. For he had named his magnificent Polynesian concubines for the days of the week—and their feelings would be hurt if he selected the wrong one to share his hut for the night!

It was the summer of 1914. At the other end of the world the Kaiser's armies were marching rough-shod over Belgium and France. Here in the Tuamotu Archipelago there was peace, moonlight—and love. But it wasn't always that way . . .

The saga of Mike Malloy started when the S.S. *Albrecht*, out of Bremen, went down 700 miles west of Pitcairn Island. Mountainous seas had sprung the rusty plates of the old merchant freighter.

Mike, the only American, had pushed off in a life boat with five of the crew, three Germans, a Swede and a Spaniard. Fortunately well-padded, Mike survived the lot of them, and buried them all at sea. There had been no food or water in the life boat. The "provisions" the Spaniard had lugged aboard turned out to be boxes of cigars, cigarettes and soap, and a case of dynamite. Mike decided to save the dynamite for the time when his Irish-American spirit couldn't hold

(Continued on page 48)

**Adrift on a storm-tossed sea, a
vengeful wind hurled him from ecstasy
to hell and back again—all at the
hands of seven shameless beauties!**

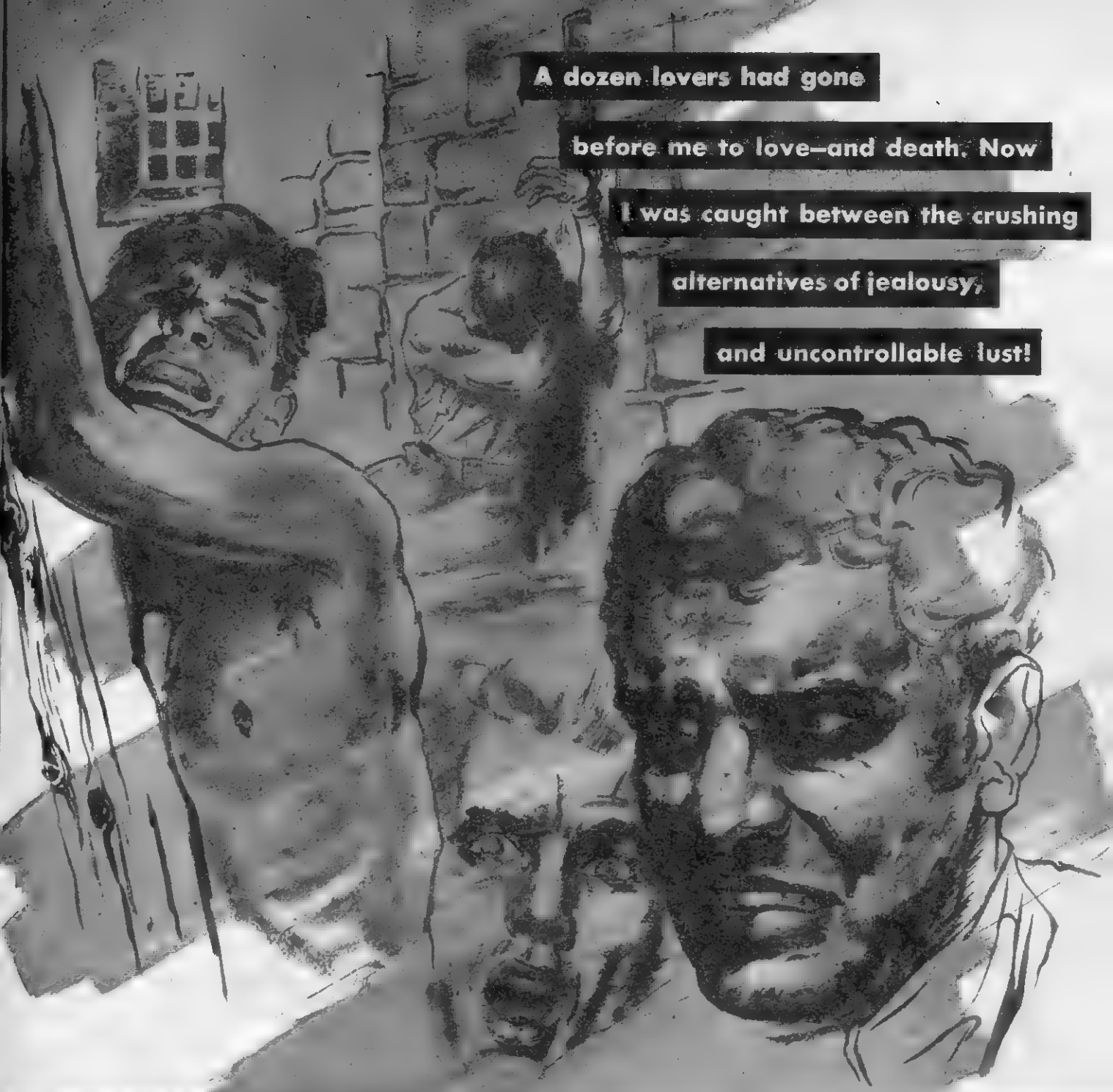


QUEEN OF A THOUSAND CONVICTS!

To taste
her lips
was to
feast in
hell...

LADY with the WHIP

By SGT. "X"
as told to BILL BECKER



A dozen lovers had gone

before me to love—and death. Now

I was caught between the crushing

alternatives of jealousy,

and uncontrollable lust!

MY NAME WE'LL LEAVE as "Sgt. X" because I'm back on duty now with my old Legion outfit—after two years spent in El Omar military prison, a heat drenched hell where a sex-crazed ex-prostitute known as "The Tigress" made a habit of taking handsome prisoners as her lovers and then tortured them to death in the solitary silence of underground cells.

Her real name was Dominique Caumot. She had been a Coast port prostitute from the time she was fourteen. Nearly six feet tall—with a wide-shouldered, deep-breasted, powerful frame and gleaming, coal-black eyes that indicated the cruel African strain running in her blood, Dominique had flowered into magnificent womanhood in the stinking dung of the port's brothels. And it wasn't long before she began to look for an escape from the

long, sweaty nights she was forced to spend in the arms of sour-smelling soldiers and the brown, black and yellow sailors who poured into "Madame Cecile's."

And, miraculously enough, Dominique *had* found the freedom she sought, when she met and conquered a fiery French officer, Commandant Paul St. Yves, the gross, sadistic warden of the "incorrigible" military prison at El Omar, buried in the near-trackless equatorial desert of French West Africa.

At the end of a four-day orgy of wild drinking and lovemaking at "Madame Cecile's," during which the Commandant's violent passions were fiercely matched by Dominique's straining, demanding embraces, St. Yves could no longer face the dreary prospect of
(Continued on page 52)

In the sudden, overwhelming panic of a fiery holocaust...

Even The Rats Died

Two thousand men, freed from
the misery of Andersonville,
were aboard the *Sultana*, the
night her boilers blew!

Hundreds of sleeping soldiers
were catapulted into the icy
river as a vast sheet of fire
roared up through the vessel.

By MARK SUFRIN

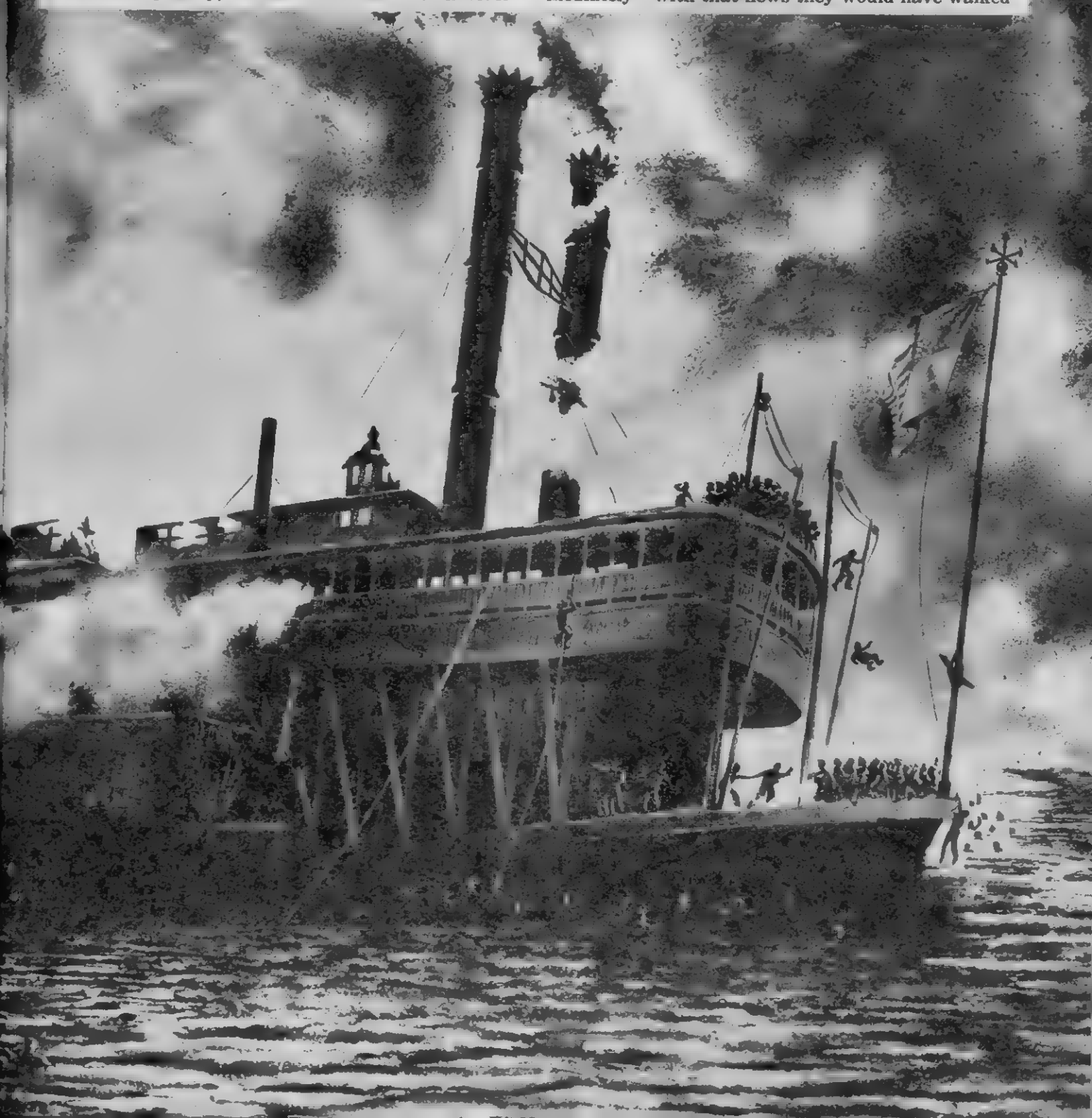
Illustrated by BUD GRAMER

ON APRIL 4, 1865, the Confederate prison camps were thrown open. The starving wrecks walked and crawled out of Andersonville, limped and stumbled across a rutted field to a railroad siding to wait for a train to Montgomery, Alabama. Bodies encrusted with filth and running sores, they sat for hours in their own stench until the freight puffed into sight. When it approached, there was a furious, screaming fight to get on board! Every man was afraid to be left behind—close to the memory of that morbid pesthole. They had killed in prison to survive, and with the promise of home so close, they struggled with equally frenzied desperation to get a place on the train.

At Montgomery, a boat took them down river

to Selma, where they were joined by others. It had happened the same way in all the compounds: one moment they were hopeless, half-alive; waiting for a bullet, disease or starvation to kill them. Then, with no warning, the stockade gates opened wide—at Danville, Selma, Libby, Blackshear, Milan, Meridian, Castle Morgan, and in the most notorious of them all—Andersonville, in Sumter County, Georgia, where 14,000 soldiers had died!

Another train took them to Meridian, Mississippi, where the road to Vicksburg was pointed out and they made the rest of the journey across the width of the state on foot. They had been told that a steamer would take them north almost immediately—with that news they would have walked



clear up to the Rockies, if necessary.

Many men died on the march, and their festering bodies were left where they fell. On a raw day in early Spring, the rest straggled into Camp Fisk, a procession of ghostly figures in tattered, faded remnants of uniforms. The Confederate camp was four miles from Vicksburg, overlooking the Mississippi. It was a hastily improvised repatriation center, shacks and tents in a sea of odorous mud. But to the thousands of prisoners funneled there from all over the South, it was a dream come true. It was the gateway to the North—and home!

When they came into camp, they expected the kind of meal they had tortured themselves dreaming about in endless nights: heaping portions of ham and bacon, good wheat bread, eggs, fowl and coffee. But the men in the long lines were given just one piece of hardtack and tasteless coffee. They grumbled until one of the Negro cooks told them the reason for the skimpy ration. When the first men had arrived at Fisk, the authorities scoured the countryside for scarce food, trying to put some quick energy into the prisoners' failing bodies with a big meal. The first night, hundreds died, retching with agonizing pain, their stomachs rebelling under the sudden gorging.

ON THE EVENING OF April 24, twenty days after they'd arrived at Fisk, a small point of light was spotted many miles down the river by a sentry. Fascinated, he stared out into the night. The light loomed a little larger for a time, then seemed to stand still, like a spot of orange painted on a canvas. He decided it was only a signal light from a cavalry detachment down the river, and was about to turn away when the glow spread before his eyes. In a few minutes he saw the unmistakable outline of a big sidewheeler steamboat!

He shouted across the camp and his cry was taken up by others: "The ship!—The ship!" From the tents and improvised hovels, an excited murmuring, then an exultant shouting began. The men crowded outside to see the big, beautiful boat, its great paddlewheels churning the water in a song of freedom. Forgetting their weakened condition, the cheering ex-prisoners hurried toward the lip of the bluffs.

They could hear the throbbing beat of the steamer; they could see the smoke and sparks shooting from its giant stacks. Even as its whistle split the air with two piercing blasts, officers rode into the area and told the men to pack whatever belongings they had, then report to the sergeant in charge of their section. The happy men pushed desperately, fighting with each other to get cleared as quickly as possible. The sight of the boat had put new strength into emaciated bodies—even before the officers could finish their instruc-

tions, they started a rush for their tents! The officers brought them to attention, completed their orders and then dismissed them with a soft and embarrassed, "Good Luck—God save you!" The men responded with a cheer for the "Johnny Rebs" and rushed off.

Captain J. C. Mason, standing in the wheelhouse of the steamer *Sultana*, ordered the helmsman to swing close to shore. He walked out on deck, lit a cigar, and talked to one of the cabin passengers. He was a good riverman, proud of his almost-new craft, which had been built only two years before. It was registered at 1,719 tons and marked for the Delta cotton trade. Suddenly, he hurried back into the wheelhouse to caution the helmsman; the lower river was at flood stage, the current was swift and strong and the foaming water was over the banks, spreading into the lowlands.

The *Sultana* had started from New Orleans carrying sugar, assorted livestock, and about 100 passengers. The animals had been restless as the steamer rode the swift-running river, and Mason hoped there wouldn't be too many men to pick up at Vicksburg. His legal limit was 376 people, including a crew of 85, but he realized that he'd have to stretch the rules a little. At a general's insistence, he had done just that when he carried the Second Missouri colored troops back a year ago. But sometimes, he thought, these army people can be downright unreasonable!

As the big sidewheeler eased into its berth, he had little idea of what kind of troops he was scheduled to carry. He hoped they weren't cavalry—too damned rambunctious; their nervous mounts might injure some of his cargo—and then there was the filth.

ALMOST BEFORE THE ship tied up, he saw endless lines of men walking down a torch-lit road. Mason looked on dumbfounded! They were a strange-looking lot, surging toward the *Sultana* with a pushing, jerking movement—shouting, singing, and joking. They were ragged, without weapons, or any distinguishing uniform. As the first men broke out onto the glare of lights on the dock, he saw their feverish faces, the skin drawn tight over bones, blotched faces pocked with sores, crippled limbs, a gallery of grotesque, lost souls. Then he realized who they were—prisoners who had returned from hell!

Before the gangplank could be lowered, some of them tried to swim the few feet or jump to the hurricane deck. Mason spotted a mounted officer and sent a crewman to bring him aboard. He asked how many men he was expected to take . . . he said he understood and pitied them and wanted to help, but he had to watch out for the safety of his ship and the other passengers. The officer told him that the men had to be



taken to Illinois and Ohio for treatment and discharge, as soon as possible. Mason would have to take as many men as the ship could possibly hold.

The crew tried to maintain order, but it was impossible! The ex-prisoners filled the hurricane deck, then the lower deck, then poured onto the boiler deck. They jammed into every corner of the steamer: hull, cabins, Texas deck, even the pilothouse!

As Mason watched helplessly, his engineer fought his way through and told him that the boilers were leaking badly. The captain thought he could use this as an excuse not to take on the battered human cargo. But when he heard the hysterical shouts of joy as the men clambered aboard, he ordered a repair gang to get to work.

The last stragglers, half-carried by stronger comrades or some of the two companies of regular troops who would also travel up-river, came aboard and, miraculously, found some place to rest themselves. The *Sultana* couldn't have carried another soul! There was no passage for the crew to move around—every gangway and corridor, every available bit of space was filled with sick men, lying, sitting, standing shoulder-to-shoulder, jammed tight against each other, but uncomplaining in their weak stupor.

The boiler trouble was fixed more rapidly than hoped for, and when the *Sultana* finally left the lights of Vicksburg behind, there were about 2,300 people on board—seven times more than the ship was designed to carry!

MASON WARNED THE MEN not to crowd to one side when a landing was made, for fear the boat

would capsize. She was bound for Memphis and Cairo, then up the Ohio to Evansville, Louisville and Cincinnati. The captain prayed they would be able to get in and out of the tricky berths without accident. The ship managed to clear the wharf, and, laboring under its tremendous load, puffed upstream, fighting the murderous current. For two days, the boat traveled slowly, but without any sign of trouble, stopping at Helena, Arkansas. On the evening of April 26, the *Sultana* steamed into Memphis. Some of the passengers happily fled the stinking ship, and the hogsheads of sugar were unloaded. A group of soldiers went ashore to see the sights, heading for one of the numerous "Soldier Rests," determined to drink up whatever whiskey they'd missed in the long years of confinement.

While the boat was still docked at Memphis, another leaky boiler was discovered. The repair gang set to work again, and had the job completed by sailing time.

There were still no muster rolls, and when the *Sultana* cast off, the soldiers who had not returned were hardly missed. Drunk, sleeping or sick, they lay in the taverns and muddy alleys of the river town as the ship sailed. The packet crossed the river to take on coal, then headed for Cairo, Illinois, where many of the men were to be discharged.

The current was still wild and strong, and the big paddle-wheels thrashed the water, fighting to gain speed before she was turned and headed downstream, out of control. Mason, troubled, looked down into the swirling river. "If we can only hold as we're going now," he thought. But again, the engineer came topside with bad news: one of the four boilers was acting up. Mason ordered makeshift repairs and gave strict orders that the news be kept from all but the crew.

But the men from the prisons were oblivious to everything. Their thoughts were only of home. Two or three more days of the uncomfortable trip and they would see their families again, sleep and eat and rest. Even then, as they sailed the river, the terrible memories were beginning to fade. They had long ago given up their lives as they watched thousands of men die from disease, starvation, brutality, the cannibalism of their own comrades, and the panicky shooting of the old men and boys who guarded them. Now, each new light from shore was a beacon on their journey to freedom.

The *Sultana* was making progress, but slowly. The current buffeted her, and the wheezing, straining boilers fought to push the abnormal load against the choppy tide.

About two in the morning, William Floyd, acting master's mate aboard the river gunboat *Grossbeak*, lying near Memphis, saw the lights of the *Sultana* as it took on coal and then moved up-river. It was the only craft

moving in the vicinity, and he watched as it steamed into the night. He saw the lights disappear behind a group of wooded islands, then he turned to scan the river below.

ONLY MOMENTS LATER, he was thrown to the deck—stunned by the force of a deafening blast. The *Sultana's* tired boilers, unable to hold the mounting steam-pressure, exploded with a sky-splitting crash that was heard the nine miles back to Memphis. A red-orange flame boiled into the black sky, lighting up the river with a huge column of fire!

Seconds later, there was another convulsive roar, and it almost slashed the steamer apart. Hundreds of sleeping soldiers were catapulted through the air into the cold water. With the flailing bodies went great chunks of twisted machinery, fragments of railing, deck-beams and cabin furniture. Red-hot coals rained out, hissing as they hit the water, smashing into the struggling men flung clear of the ship. They fought the turbulent water and grabbed for any bit of floating wreckage. Many, floundering in a state of shock, drowned instantly.

Fire! Fire—the dread of all sailors—broke out and ate into the whole middle section of the ship with lashing, incredible fury. The *Sultana* began to list and a human stampede hurtled into the water to escape the inferno. The superstructure of the ship collapsed, leaving a huge, gaping hole in the middle of the hurricane deck. Hundreds of screaming men were trapped by the flames and falling timbers. Most of the others, knowing their only hope lay in the river, plunged off the sagging decks. For hundreds of yards around, the water was soon full of bobbing heads.

The weak, half-starved men were in no condition to fight the icy current. In a short time, most of them gave up the struggle and sank into a bleak grave, their bloated bodies to be picked up many miles downstream in the days that followed. Others, able to swim, didn't know where the shoreline was. The river was three miles wide at this point, and they swam in aimless circles, draining the little strength they had until they were too exhausted to keep afloat.

A few made shore, and when they struck inland, stumbling in the dark, drowned in the flooded flatlands beyond the crumbling levees. One or two made it to high ground, from where they watched the catastrophe. They saw boats steaming frantically toward the burning packet, but it was too late . . .

The tragic ship was out of control, drifting helplessly. It headed downstream, endangering other craft and crushing into groups of gasping swimmers. The deck supporting the passenger cabins had collapsed at one end, forming a steep ramp from which the screaming men and wreckage slid into the area where the roaring fire was at its worst!

The wild, braying sound of the livestock below could be heard above the human terror. The stench of burning flesh, animal and human, hung over the doomed ship. Men were trampled to death as the panicked mob surged to the flaming rail. Hundreds managed to hit the water in a temporary escape, but there were many who fell back into the fire, screaming in pain and blindness. Those who still had enough presence of mind, tried to wrench doors or window shutters from their hinges, toss them overboard and jump into the river, clinging precariously in the powerful current.

Some of the men had been tossed hundreds of feet in the air; one man found a floating tree and held fast until a boat from the *Grossbeak* picked him up. Three others were blown from the ship with a big piece of the afterdeck under them. They made a flat landing about 25 yards from the ship and, still dazed, rode the wreckage down to Memphis where they were rescued.

But the old brutality of Andersonville, the naked terror of the desperate drive for survival, arose again. To get possession of a piece of wreckage or a place away from the searing flames, men murdered the friends with whom they had talked and joked only moments before! They huddled together in the bow and stern, the only sections of the ship where it was still possible to temporarily escape the scorching hell.

THE HUGE TWIN smokestacks, the famous mark of every Mississippi packet-boat, shuddered and crashed to the deck, pinning men until the fire silenced their anguished shrieks. Sections of the stacks smashed into men trying to keep afloat in the water, killing them there with swift mercy.

Soon after the fire had broken out, a strange cry, almost a death chant, came from the men trapped on board. Over and over again, they sang out in a weird monotone, "*The boat's sinking! . . . The boat's sinking!*" They had survived the bloody battles of the Wilderness, Chickamauga and Shiloh; they had beaten the slime and death of Andersonville and Cahaba; and now, they knew that this time there would be no release—their luck had been pressed too far!

Many were too frightened to take to the water, and clung to the sides of the bow, hoping that the *Sultana* would reach shore before the flames engulfed them. There were screams and cries for mercy, mumbled prayers. And unshamed tears. Two men grabbed revolvers and blew their brains out!

Mason and his crew struggled to stem the panic, but it was useless. Suddenly, drifting out of control, the ship turned in the current. The wind blew the fire toward the bow—the remaining survivors were singed to ashes like so many flies!


(Continued on page 76)



Left: turban-wrapped Chris Viereck. Right: Jere Nelson.

Girls, choruses
and choruses of
them! Enough
beauty to set
men's imaginations
afire round the entire world!

A sultry, exotic charmer—Jean Weston.



THE BELLES OF LAS VEGAS

TO ILLUSTRATE the magnetic lure of Las Vegas' gambling tables, the story is told of the man who frantically continued to roll the dice, even after he was told his house was afire. But in the Glitter City these days, there's something with even more of a lure—a curvy parcel of the world's most gorgeous gals. When these talented show-girls make the rounds of the Vegas night spots, even the dice tables empty in a hurry. Our question is: is it any wonder? ● ● ●

Lovely Jane Easton, whom many call "the girl with the world's most beautiful legs!"

Always smiling, always beguiling, Carol Allen has won many beauty contests in her time.

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Curvesome and blonde, Jane Easton has a figure of near-classic proportions.


Boasting 38-24-36 measurements, Jere Nelson has bright future



Carol Allen is captain of chorus line.

LAS VEGAS (continued)

In nightly arrays of
moods and poses, this
bevy of beauties has
set the town on its ear!



Chris Viereck, long
known for excellent
dance interpretations,
also paints as hobby.

Jean Weston, an oft-time
beauty contest winner,
spends much of her free
time at swimming pool.



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the deadliest

By **RAND O'FALLON**

Illustrated by **SID SHORES**



I raged in helpless fury, but there wasn't a thing I could do. The

killers were in complete command. Even if they didn't finish

us, the thread of coral death they left behind would do the job!

cargo



Sunny giggled like a lunatic. Then, with a vicious stab, she slashed the knife across my wife's back!

FOR A MONTH, Madge and I had been living aboard our cabin cruiser. During most of the period, we remained tied up at the boatyard on the west coast of Florida. But early in February, we decided to shove off again, cruising down the Ten Thousand Islands chain, just fishing and loafing. There were still about six weeks left of our "dream vacation."

We told the yard owner we were leaving the next morning. I suppose that word must have gotten around pretty quickly. For right after supper, a young couple showed up at the dock, hailed us, and asked for a lift.

They were a nice-looking pair, and this wasn't the first time youngsters had hitch-hiked with us, offering in exchange, to make themselves generally useful en route. In this case the Castles—they gave us the odd nicknames of Windy and Sunny—wished only to be dropped off at Fort Myers Beach, a short run down in Pine Island Sound. I wondered why they hadn't taken a cab down there, but assumed they wanted the fun of a boat ride. Anyway, it would be no trouble.

They immediately set about making themselves at home, but aside from a few odds and ends, there was little for them to do. We turned in early, giving them the privacy of the forward cabin while we slept aft.

The next morning, bright and early, we shoved off and were soon slipping down the Orange and onto the broad Caloosahatchee. We passed Fort Myers before sunup, then hit choppy water out in Pine Island Sound. We decided to have breakfast first and then to make the run across to the shell beach our guests wished to visit.

As we ate, I couldn't help noticing Sunny's striking beauty. She was a well-stacked platinum blonde, and after her night's sleep, moved with the grace of a well-oiled tigress. After coffee, Windy and I went upstairs, while the girls remained in the galley to clean up.

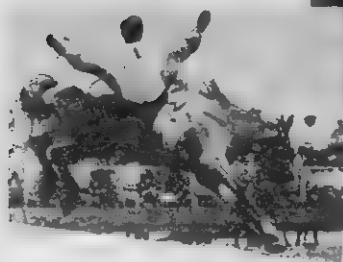
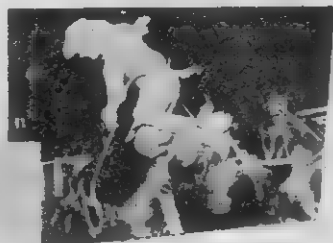
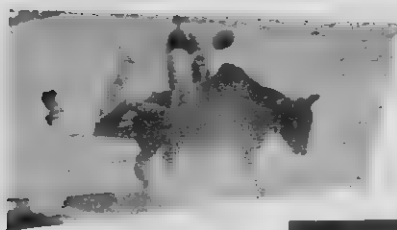
I suppose I was just plain stupid not to have suspected anything, but the pair had seemed like nothing more than a couple of nice, average kids. My first warning

(Continued on page 57)



The RODEO

THE NO. 1 SUCKER



**They enter the bone-crushing,
bloody-horned world of the "Suicide
Circuit" to make a living. They
should call it "making a dying!"**

By RICHARD VAN BENSCHOTEN

THE CROWD GATHERED quickly around the high-wire netting that guards the ledges around the observation balcony on top of New York City's Empire State Building. There was a low buzz of subdued, somber conversation. Over in one corner, near the building wall, two guards were trying to revive a woman who had fainted. Most of the others were drawn and white-faced. Only moments previously, right before the eyes of the typical, summer-holiday crowd, a man had suddenly scrambled up the net. Before anyone could move to stop him, he had leapt out into space!

An hour or so later, in a nearby cocktail bar, two of the witnesses were still talking about the experience. The alcohol which they had imbibed in an effort to wipe out the bitter scene, had slightly fogged their brains. And rather than ignoring the frightening memory, they were deep in a discussion of that very subject—jumping off roofs.

"Well," said one man, finally, "tell you what I'll do. Talking doesn't do any good. It's proof we want. Now I'm willing to admit that jumping from 86 floors up in the air is stupid—but what about *one* floor? I own a little house out in Queens—prettiest place you ever saw. Now if you'll climb up *there* and jump, you'll see how safe it is."

"Yeah?" asked the second man thickly. "What's in it for me? Suppose I get hurt? Suppose I end up in the hospital? What do I get out of it?"

"OK," replied the challenger, "I'm willing to be fair about it. We'll make it a nice friendly little bet . . . say \$100. If you make the jump and walk off OK, I pay you. If you don't land OK, or get hurt at all, you pay me. That way you'll have an interest in being careful. What do you say? Is it a bet?"



COWBOY OF AMERICAN SPORTS

The second man looked at him for a long time. Even through the haze of half a dozen drinks, cold, hard sanity shone through. He got to his feet abruptly and glared at his erstwhile drinking partner. "What the hell do you think I am," he snorted, "crazy or something?" He turned on his heel and walked away.

He had a point there. For a man to calmly jump off a roof—even a little single-story job—for peanuts, he'd have to be either insensibly drunk, or out of his mind.

And yet right now, somewhere in this enlightened land of ours, dozens of men are doing something which will almost certainly give them a bigger bump, a harder fall, and an even higher probability of ending up in the hospital! They call themselves sportsmen, athletes. They go by the name of Rodeo Cowboys.

The jarring smash of a cowboy hitting the ground after being tossed by a bucking bronc or a raging brahma bull is actually *greater* than that suffered by a single-story jumper. And add to that the extra danger of being stomped, pawed, kicked or gored and we see that the odds against the cowboy are actually far greater.

If you thought the bet described above was wild, it's nothing to the stacked deck against which the cowboy is playing. First of all, he has to *pay* for the privilege of risking his life to begin with! And then, even if he comes through it in perfect shape, that still doesn't give him so much as a look at a prize. He has to actually win his event, or at least place high among the top few men competing, if he wants some pay. And what with dozens, sometimes hundreds of horseman playing against him, he ac-

tually has very little chance at all to break even.

Sure, a few boys come out ahead—way ahead. They're good and they can prove it. But even they go through plenty of pain to prove that they're not suckers. And for every one who succeeds in the business, there are at least a hundred who have *absolutely nothing at all* (broken bones and other injuries always excepted) to show for their time, their energy and their money.

JIM SHOULDERS, who was crowned last year as the first three-time all around cowboy champion in history, says he's been "lucky" in this roughest of all sports. Yet he can count up the following accidents: All on separate occasions, Jim has broken both collar bones, both arms, both legs and both ankles! His knees have been sprung so badly that both of them have to be taped up before he rides. One of his thigh muscles has been pulled so often that it has to be strapped down before he mounts up.

And yet Jim said recently, "Shucks, I've never been hurt seriously. Lots of the boys who've been traipsin' around this suicide circuit have to tie their legs on before they ride. It's not the years, it's the mileage."

Shoulders, top cowboy in the nation for three years running, is also the top money winner in history, with \$43,381 in 1956. Last year he was held back a bit by some of his "minor" injuries.

But Jim Shoulders is quick to emphasize that a lot of the riders aren't as lucky as he has been. Hundreds of them have been permanently disabled as far as rodeo competition is concerned, and a great many are

(Continued on page 72)



Clem Labine (checked trunks) and Don Hoak arrive at the beach. Getting ready for the day's sport takes only a few minutes as the boys help each other into their underwater equipment.



They may be novices with a skin-diver's speargun, but old baseball hands, Clem Labine of Los Angeles and Don Hoak of Cincinnati demonstrate that they're quick at picking up any game!

Spearfishing Rookies

BASEBALL is a wonderful institution. And one of the best things about it is that it allows its heroes plenty of free time for fun and relaxation. In the off season, more and more of the stars of the diamond are turning to water sports.

Clem Labine and Don Hoak, buddies for many a year, may well be old veterans when it comes to baseball. But in the art of skin-diving, they're strictly the rawest of rookies. Still, that's no bar to fun. And fun is all the boys are after.

Catching a fish with a pole and line is all very well, but for real thrills, there's nothing like going

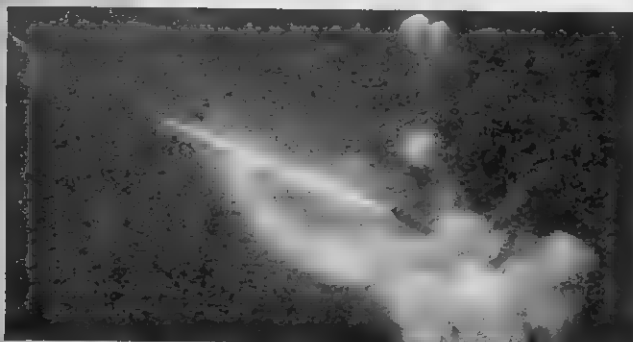
into the water after your prey and hunting him right in his own element.

Best of all, there's neither umpire, manager nor bloodthirsty fan to get on a man's neck. Success or failure in this sportsman's seahunt means little, except for personal satisfaction. And the kick of hooking a big one on the end of your spear is well worth all the effort.

Oh yes, just for the record, Hoak caught a fish; Labine came home empty-handed. But that didn't matter. Hoak's fish was big enough for two, and it did make a very tasty dinner. ● ● ●

Down below the surface of the water, the speargun is held ready as the search for gamefish begins in earnest.

With spear inserted in the gun, Don takes aim as a school of fish swims by. Gun can only shoot about twenty-five feet.



ABOVE—As the fish swims within range, spear is fired. And a direct hit is scored by Hoak.

BELOW—A few short strokes and lucky spearman has grasped his catch, pulling out used spear.



Back on the beach, left, Hoak shows fish to Labine. Then they retire to cabin, below, to prepare for a fine meal.



CHICAGO

In the Windy City, the C-Girls are a bit more leisurely, a bit more concerned about their customer's "needs." But it still boils down to soft flesh for cold cash.

ST. LOUIS

In old St. Lou, the sin-chicks work as a team—blond, redhead and brunette. The bartenders call them "Triple Threats," and to an unsuspecting commuter, they are

NEW YORK

In Gotham, the setup is modernized for the atomic age—from bar to bed, in the air-conditioned office suite—"love in a hurry," with no prying neighbors.

LOS ANGELES

In LA, the ranks are crowded with hungry, would-be starlets, who trade love for loot with no holds barred. Who knows, this John might have a studio connection.

the uncrowned king of Africa

White Witch Doctor of the Zulus

PEACE PARTY

single command from Peder
and blood-thirsty warriors
fall to ground in trance.
Upon awakening they performed
traditional friendship dance

come the master of a wild jungle valley!

THE QUEDENI VALLEY of South Africa is about as remote a spot as man may find in any part of the world. Except by air, it is almost inaccessible. The only other way in or out is on horseback, over rugged mountain trails that are rarely wider than twelve-inches or so. The valley is part of the Zulu preserve, and its natives are simple savages who have only remotely felt the impact of civilization. Besides the tribesmen, only one white man makes his home there, Peder Tilestad. A Russian by birth, Tilestad is a refugee from the 1917 communist revolution, seeking refuge in the Dark Continent.

By profession, Tilestad is a storekeeper and trader. But to his customers, and that includes the entire population of the valley, he is far more respected and feared as a witch doctor, the most powerful and terrifying magician with whom they have ever had contact. Peder Tilestad is a natural hypnotist. Unaware of his talent until about twelve years ago, when he first began to read about the subject, he has since developed such control over the population, that he can not only put entire tribes to sleep in an instant, but also cure simple diseases, quiet fears, put an end to quarrels and even halt inter-tribal wars. Such is the magnitude of his power.



Native witch doctor who accuses Tilestad of fostering superstition and fear.



In demonstration of power, Tilestad puts entire village to sleep in mass hypnosis. (Below) Even cattle succumb as the white magician stands over them. (Right) Villagers awake and sit up only when ordered, completely forgetful of problems that previously bothered them.



WHITE WITCH DOCTOR OF THE ZULUS (continued)

**One man or a whole tribe;
it makes no difference to
Tilestad. His control over
the Zulus is absolute and
completely unchallenged!**

These facts have been attested to by such a noted expert as Dr. Aleko Lilius, a world-renowned member of the famous Explorer's Club of New York.

In his mild-mannered way, Tilestad is an absolute dictator throughout the valley. Anything he desires can be accomplished almost instantly. The Zulus are under such deep and constant post-hypnotic suggestion, that a single word is often enough to put them into a trance. The white magician insists he wants nothing in the way of personal gain. All he desires, he says, is to keep the natives happy and comfortable. And in that, he has succeeded. For example, while our own photographer watched, two groups of warriors, unalterably bent on mutual slaughter, were put to sleep by Tilestad, and while under hypnosis, were required to dance the ancient tribal "friendship" ceremony. When they were brought around again, they had become bosom buddies.

• • •

NEWS ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

ODDMENTS, INFORMATION AND ADVICE TO KEEP YOU FEELING BETTER

● **REAL MEN** presents a summary of
● the most important discoveries of
● modern Medicine, in order to help
● you live longer, avoid disease,
● and get the most out of your life!

Five notes on keeping you and your family healthy

Tuberculin tests. Three Federal agencies have recommended that instead of the compulsory school X-ray tests for tuberculosis, tuberculin patch tests be given. These agencies, all in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare are: the Public Health Service, the Office of Education, and the Children's Bureau. The Department feels that the value of mass X-ray programs should be weighed against unnecessary exposure to radiation. Under the plan recommended to state and local authorities, X-ray photographs would be limited to persons whose skin tests were positive for tuberculosis. In the skin test, a substance called tuberculin is applied to the skin by an adhesive patch, or by injection between the layers of the skin. If tuberculosis bacilli are present, a reaction will take place, such as a swelling of the skin.

Radiation. The American Medical Association recently received a research report, showing that none of a group of 335 individuals exposed to radar beams has suffered any ill effects. Dr. G. I. Barron, medical director of the California Division of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation in Burbank, Calif., gave the report. Among the group, Dr. Barron said, exposure to radar varied from an occasional incidental contact, to as much as four hours daily. Some of the group had had regular exposure to radar for thirteen years. The employees were examined at intervals of six, twelve and twenty-four months in an effort to find sudden or cumulative biological effects from radar. A similar non-exposed group was also examined. Dr. Barron said the examinations showed no significant changes in the exposed group.

Hypnotism in heart surgery. A 14-year-old girl with her heart opened, was awakened on the operating table to demonstrate the value of hypnotism in surgery, a physician reported to the American Medical Association. While her blood was being pumped by a machine, the girl opened her eyes and responded repeatedly to instructions. The physician, Dr. Milton Marmer, said the girl had been put to sleep again by suggestion and had come through the operation without ill effect. Twenty days later, she left the hospital. The doctor stated that a return to consciousness while under open heart surgery is a good idea, because it allows the physicians to check on whether a patient's brain is being damaged while the machine is doing the heart's job. With hypnosis, he de-

clared, a smaller amount of anesthetic was needed to put the patient to sleep. It also enabled the doctor to restore her to slumber after once awakening her. The reduced amount of anesthetic minimized the toxic effects and prevented nausea afterward, Dr. Marmer said. Children between the ages of 7 and 14 are good hypnosis subjects, because of their heightened powers of imagination and their ability to play a role or create a fantasy.

Thyroid and emotions. Psychiatrists who have noted that thyroid gland disorders may go hand in hand with mental illness, have been baffled in their efforts to chart precisely which disorders produced what effects. A Manhattan group submitted a promising progress report to the American Psychiatric Association concerning triiodothyronine (known as "T3" among hormone specialists), by far the most potent of all thyroid hormones and their derivatives. T3 was given to 24 patients kept on a strict routine in a metabolic ward. Everything they ate, drank and excreted was weighed and analyzed. Most were schizophrenics: some were psychoneurotics. Nearly all were depressed (at times suicidal), emotionally unresponsive, resentful, uninterested in sex and depersonalized. (Common complaints were, "I am numb" and, "Everything I do is automatic"). Even in minute quantities, T3 made a marked difference in 14 patients (one showed no response, and nine others showed slight changes, usually a decrease in resentment). To the psychiatrists trying to make closer contact with patients for more effective treatment, the important thing was that the 14 became markedly more responsive. In many cases, the numb automatism disappeared. Emotions that had been buried in the unconscious came out in the open, and could be dealt with in psychotherapy. Far from being just another tranquilizer, the hormone brought out hostility and in some cases sexual drive in previously depressed patients, which helped the psychiatrist to pinpoint more precisely the emotional problems they faced. Because T3 may have temporarily disturbing as well as beneficial effects, the doctors see little place for its use outside a well-staffed psychiatric hospital. There, they believe, it shows great promise.

Bursitis. The persistent pain associated with acute flare-ups of this common affliction can often be relieved safely and effectively by aspirin or other analgesic drugs. If inflammation is severe, the doctor may prescribe ACTH.

HI WAS A KILL-HUNGRY MONSTER—black as sin and twice as mean! And he came at me across the shadows of that rocky cave like something from the kennels of hell. I raised my gun and fired, but the bullets had no effect! They seemed to bounce off his hide as if they were only drops of rain.

Jack Michael and I were helping set up a camp for seismographic operations in the jungles above the Belize River, north of Cayo in British Honduras. During the second week of our work, we heard from local Mayas about the "monster" carrying off a little boy from a nearby village. Knowing the primitive weapons with which these people were equipped, we decided to investigate and do what we could to help.

We recruited the services of Federico Ruiz, a rum-cured mestizo utility man, who knew the country, and from past jobs with chicle and mahogany crews, could speak Mayan as well as English and Spanish. Armed with a couple of shotguns and my own .38 revolver, we hiked with light packs through the jungle to the small palm-and-thatch Indian settlement.

We found the natives in a state of excitement over a fragment of the lost boy's clothing, which village hunters had found deep in the jungle.

The shred of cloth had been found on the edge of "forbidden" ground—old burial mounds and Mayan ruins sacred to the superstitious natives. No Indian would dare venture there. We began to pick up other details, and with every new fact, the situation became more puzzling.

An older playmate of the missing boy came up with a story that sent the villagers into a state of panic. While he had been (Continued on page 77)

We stalked the

Ghost that fed on HUMAN FLESH!



Strange legends told the natives of a

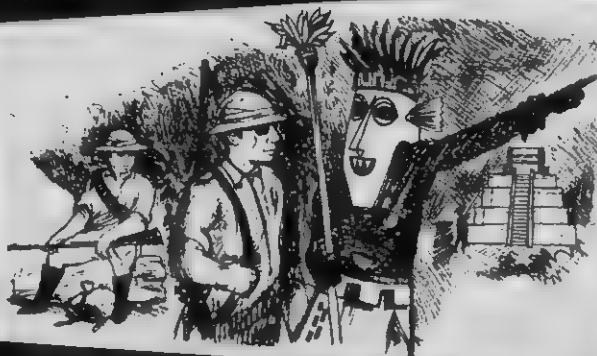
shaggy, man-killing monster—who

would someday return and claw

them all to mangled, bloody shreds!

By WILLARD BREEN

Illustrated by BARRY WALDMAN



As the sacrificial pig was
lifted, a beautiful young
woman rose. To the sound of
primitive wails, she writhed
in glistening frenzy!



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THE JUNGLE HAREM (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

out any longer. Then he planned to go out in one "helluva blaze of glory!"

But Destiny and the Goddess of Love had other plans for Mike Malloy. After three days and nights in the vast Pacific, his life boat hit Marotiri Island with a hurricane-force gale fanning its aft. The boat slid through the thunderous breakers like a greased pig—then struck the sand and stopped dead! Mike kept on going, tumbling into the roaring night, coming down with a bone-jarring thud.

He kissed the ground fervently, dug his fingers and toes into the sand to anchor his body against the blasting winds, and prepared to sleep out the storm. But he was shocked awake. In the eerie, gray light he saw what looked like two naked girls flash past him and grab his life boat! He squinted hard—they were girls, and they were naked! With each gigantic incoming wave, they moved the boat higher on the beach. They worked like demons, water cascading over them.

Always the gentleman, Mike tried to get up and help, but his exhausted muscles refused to budge. A bemused smile on his face, he watched the girls till sheer exhaustion bowed his head. His last remembered sensation was one of the girls grinding her wet, sandy foot into his face. . . .

IT TOOK SEVEN Polynesian girls three days to get Mike well and chipper enough to torture him. In that time he got a bellyful of the nut-brown beauties! During the day they reached their height of modesty by wearing a skimpy loin cloth. At night they wore their skin. Which all meant nothing to Mike; for, on the second day he was spread-eagled on the sand and roped to stakes! His rage mounted by the hour. He couldn't understand their lingo, and they couldn't understand him. So he had no idea why he was being held prisoner.

Mike had beached, though he didn't know it then, on Marotiri, the southernmost island of the Tuamotu Archipelago in French Oceania. A tiny speck in the South Pacific, Marotiri was 900 miles from Pitcairn Island, and 800 miles from Tahiti, headquarters of the French Resident.

Late in the afternoon of the third day, Mike lay staked out on the sand, cursing—telling his seven gorgeous captors what he thought of them, and what he would do when he got free. The girls and some of the men from their nearby village had hidden the life boat in dense vegetation bordering the beach, but they had discovered the cigars and cigarettes and helped themselves.

One of the girls seemed to feel a bit sorry for Mike, and would occasionally give him a smoke. She had startling, bright blue eyes and a

magnificent body. Her Polynesian mixture of white, black and yellow blood made her an outstanding beauty in a race of world-famous beautiful women. Mike would yell at her till she squatted in front of him and placed her half-smoked cigarette between his lips.

There was one girl Mike liked the least of any. She was a little darker than her pals, and liked to amuse herself by kneeling beside Mike and resting her dagger against his throat! Mike had learned to shut up during this, and the young sadist soon tired of the sport.

After a week of being staked to the beach, one night Mike was carried into the village. There was a festive air about the area, and Mike had a premonition that he was the cause of it. Children bounced coconut shells off his head, and mongrel mutts snapped at him. In the center of the village clearing, surrounded by their palm and thatch huts, was a huge, pointed stake. Kindling and leaves had been heaped near it.

The tribal chieftain stood before his large hut, casually puffing a cigar from Mike's life boat. He gestured that Mike be brought before him, then painstakingly told the Irishman why he was about to die. But Mike didn't understand a single grunt of it!

Regardless of explanations, however, it was only too obvious what was in store for him, and Malloy had no intention of being the honored guest at a human barbecue.

Something inside Mike snapped! He held his bound hands in front of him and swiftly pivoted on his heel. Five of the girls near him went down, cold conked! He lunged into another, then with his shoulder sent his knife-wielding tormentor stumbling into the fire.

She rolled out fast, scorched and screaming bloody murder! But the fire had scattered, and in the sudden darkness, Mike took off. Like a raging bull, his broad shoulders knocked over anything in his way!

In the dense foliage he made as little noise as possible, then cut for the beach. With the sand under his feet, he raced through the darkness along the water's edge. When he figured he was in the vicinity of the hidden life boat, he slowed down.

Suddenly, Mike stumbled over a volcanic formation. He sat down beside it and rubbed his rope-bound wrists against the jagged edge. After ten minutes his wrists came free, and Mike Malloy swore an oath never to be taken again.

IT TOOK HIM AN HOUR to find the life boat. In the darkness he located the case of dynamite. The natives couldn't wear, eat or smoke it, so they had left it behind. He put six of the dynamite sticks and fuses into his pants pockets, then rummaged around till he found a match and

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part of a cigar. These, too, he put into his pocket.

It was a pity, he thought, that he couldn't launch the boat and get the hell away from this den of cannibals, but he realized it would be impossible. The boat was too high up, too far away from the water for him to hope to get it down now. Maybe the next day, when the tide was high, and he could at least see what he was doing.

Nor, for that matter, could he stay where he was. It would only be a matter of time before the natives decided to look for him, and the first and most obvious place to investigate would be the boat.

Mike clambered back over the side and slithered into the cover of the jungle. He moved slowly, carefully, for he had no intention of revealing his presence to any searcher. He walked in a direction that would take him away from the village, certain that sooner or later he'd be able to find some hidden spot where he could set up a temporary camp.

Suddenly, he stopped dead in his tracks. Off in the distance, he heard voices! He listened intently, trying to make out whether they were coming toward him.

The voices were louder, and he could pick out occasional words now. The men were speaking *German*!

Mike felt a rush of elation. Maybe he was safe, after all. For while he was well aware that there was a war on, America wasn't involved. He was a neutral, and any civilized port was certainly better than the fix he was in.

The voices came closer. Then, above the voices, Mike could distinctly hear the trample of jack-boots. As they pulled into sight, he could see it was a party of German sailors. They were armed, too, led by a bristling saber-swinging officer.

A sudden instinctive warning made Mike pull back into the jungle. Perhaps it would be better to see what the Germans were up to before revealing himself.

It wasn't difficult, keeping inside the jungle that paralleled the path, to follow the war party. The noise they made was more than sufficient to cover the sound of Mike's unshod feet. They were heading directly toward the village.

At the edge of the clearing, Mike paused behind a tree. The time he had spent aboard the freighter had made him thoroughly conversant with the German language, and their talk told him plenty.

THE GERMANS HAD COME for women—and it was evident that this wasn't the first time they had carried out this mission. They were demanding that fifteen girls be turned over to them immediately, since the commander made it clear that the pleasure of the naval group was of overriding importance.

As Mike crept closer, it was apparent that the "civilized" men had

things pretty well in hand. The natives were helpless against guns.

It was suddenly obvious why the Polynesians had condemned Mike to death. Coming as he had, in a German marked boat, they had thought that he was one of the kidnappers. They were only taking what they believed to be a just revenge.

The sailors, armed with bayoneted rifles, had forced all the young girls into a group. Their laughter and banter about the maidens was crude and pointed. Mike didn't see the girl with the bright blue eyes.

Swiftly, he circled and silently climbed into the rear of the chieftain's hut.

The tribal ruler was sitting on the floor, dazed, blood trickling down his forehead. A German naval officer was struggling furiously with the blue-eyed girl on the floor! He had finally succeeded in pinning her flat when Mike's crushing blow caught him on the back of the neck! Mike had to pull the terror-stricken girl out from under the inert German.

Mike got the chief on his feet and motioned for the girl to take him out the rear. He waited a few seconds, then bellowed in a harsh Prussian voice for the sailors to come into the hut. Mike lighted three sticks of dynamite, put them behind a gourd on the floor, then ran, coming around the front of the hut as the last sailor stepped through the doorway.

The dynamite went off with a thunderous crash, lifting the hut clear off the ground! German heads, arms and legs rained on the clearing.

Out on the water, the German gunboat's motor roared to life, and that was the last Marotiri Island ever saw of the raider. . . .

It was a week later that Mike Malloy leaned against the coconut tree, trying to remember what day of the week it was. His lovely concubines stood awaiting his command, including Blue Eyes, his favorite.

By the time he was able to tell his story, Mike couldn't remember which one he actually chose that day. Not that it mattered much. They were all "interesting," as he put it.

Mike sighed deeply. It was all just a memory now. As he leaned back in his bed in the Veterans hospital, I could see a faint smile playing on his lips. He'd had a wonderful three years before the war finally caught up with him, and left him a wounded wreck of a man. Now he was coughing out his gas-scarred lungs.

"But it was worth it," he whispered hoarsely. "What I wouldn't give to be able to go back there again!"

He never got that wish. Mike Malloy died in that hospital only a short time after I spoke to him. That was in 1937.

But on the other hand, maybe it's just as well. The islands have changed a lot. At least Mike Malloy was able to keep his memories—untarnished.



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A. "Goddess of Love" . . . Julius Caesar gave Cleopatra an Empire in Egypt when he saw her in the original of this gorgeous gown. Nylon embroidered, elastic puckered midriff emphasizes the uplift of the bustline . . . Made of 100% Nylon. Permanent pleated. Pink, White, Blue, Black. Sizes 32-40. Style No. 243. \$8.98.

B. Witchcraft . . . The most exotic gown we've ever seen. Nude-shouldered, strapless nylon tricot outlines your form . . . gives a glimpse of leg through the daring front slit. Contrasting satin bows. Sizes small, medium and large. Midnight black, siren red, boudoir pink or powder blue. \$7.99. Order Style No. 6882.

C. Parisian Night . . . Give her all the glamour and enchantment of an evening in Paris with this Paris inspired Baby Doll sleep set. Made for sleeping time of enticing nylon tricot that moulds and clings to your figure. Daring scoop neckline. Comes with matching brief. Jet black, sky blue, bridal white, baby doll pink. Sizes S, M, L. Style No. 310. \$4.99.

D. Daughter of Eve . . . The perfect mate to the gown on the right. Luxurious negligee to complete the most feminine set ever. Specifically designed to enticingly hide and yet show a glimpse of the tantalizing gown underneath. Sheer lace nylon with a nylon lace top, with contrasting bow. Jet black, bridal white, sky blue, shocking pink. Sizes 32-40. Style No. 181. \$13.98.

E. Daughter of Eve . . . Beware the man who sees you in this completely feminine gown. Romantic as a full moon, captivating as a young lover's kiss. Twin layers of sheer nylon. Nylon lace bodice. Matching negligee to the left. Jet black, bridal white, sky blue, shocking pink. Sizes 32-40. Style No. 182. \$8.98.

F. Double Duty Beauty . . . When it's time to go to bed, a gal's ahead when she's dressed in dreamy nylon net. Glamorous real Mink trimmed rose gives rich touch. Nylon tricot trameis with nylon net trimmed with glamorous rhinestones. Small, medium or large. Midnight black, shell pink, powder blue. \$7.98. Order Style No. 6748.

G. Dancing Doll Set . . . Photographers dream. All lace, all lovely. Brief and beautiful panties have a wisp of a bra to match . . . show off your curves, but just enough. All dainty acetate and nylon lace. Sizes small, medium and large. Midnight black, siren red, boudoir pink or powder blue. \$4.99. Order Style No. 7006.

H. Love Pledge Panties . . . Sheer as a whisper, brief as a dream. Lace-edged nylon tricot with scarlet satin hearts that spell "I love you." Be-

spangled with brilliant rhinestones. Sizes small, medium, large. Midnight black, siren red, boudoir pink or powder blue. \$2.99. Order Style No. 7207.

I. Harem Queen Glamour-Jamas . . . You'll look langorous, exciting, breathtaking in these sheer black rayon glamour-jamas. Just picture yourself in them . . . a brief top of Peek-A-Boo black lace that clings where it should . . . stopping short to expose your smooth bare midriff. Then the final touch . . . enticing double-exposure sheer harem trousers that reveal all your charms. Bewitching Black Magic. Sizes 32-40. Color: Black only. \$9.98. Style No. 634.

K. Yours alone . . . So feminine, so utterly luxurious. Enticing bedroom peignoir — save it for your true lover's eyes alone. Yards of nylon lace delicately underlined with contrasting translucent nylon taffeta to enhance your every movement. Cutest twin bow, and push up sleeves. Midnight black with pink lining, sky blue with pink lining. Sizes 32-40. Style No. 303. \$8.98.

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ONE MAN TELLS ANOTHER . . . "AMERICA'S LEADING DESIGNER OF LINGERIE FOR SHEER ENJOYMENT!"

LADY WITH THE WHIP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)

returning to his desert prison post, with only the fat-hipped, sagging-breasted women of the nearby native village to slake his hunger.

After a long, haggling and shouting discussion with Madame Cecile, St. Yves bought Dominique's "contract" and smiling with satisfaction, led his tall beauty out of the brothel. Together they rattled away from the city in his desert-scratched command car, each immersed in private, pleasurable thoughts of what the future held in store at El Omar.

Installed in the Commandant's rather luxurious quarters just outside the prison's walls, Dominique reveled for the next few months in the novelty of obsequious black servants and their instant, deft attention to her every whim.

Gradually she began to take her surroundings and the deference paid her by servants and prison guards for granted and, at the same time a savage, restless hunger began to grip her body. The burly Commandant's bear-like passion had spent itself and St. Yves now spent more time among his bottles and cigars in his den, gambling with the head guards, than he did in her garishly-decorated boudoir. True, he visited her occasionally, but from her point of view, not nearly enough.

So she began studying the prisoners—seeing them for the first time as individual men, not faceless, shapeless figures in convict stripes. She flaunted her superb body shamelessly before them, reveling in their frantic, ill-concealed hunger to possess her.

And then she became truly dangerous.

"The Tigress" of El Omar!

AT THE TIME my own part in the story began, I was working as a

convict-gardener assigned to maintaining the lawns and flower beds that surrounded the Commandant's bungalow.

I was quite contented with this detail, after six months of sweating my blood out in the rock quarries, where all "new fish" got their first taste of El Omar's fierce discipline.

I'd been sent to the military prison for striking a drunken officer who'd insulted me in a cafe, while I was on leave from my desert Legion post. My sentence was two years and until I'd been transferred to the garden detail, I didn't think I'd be able to survive the heat and dust of the rock quarries.

Now, however, I felt hope again, although I'd heard some rumors that quite a number of convicts on the garden detail had wound up suddenly and mysteriously in the terrible underground solitary confinement cells.

It was also whispered around the prison that these men, once sent to solitary, had never been seen again. Whether they were simply rotting away in the airless, lightless cells in hopeless horror, or were dead, no one seemed to know.

I'D KNOWN, OF COURSE, through the prison grapevine, that Commandant St. Yves had brought back a mistress, when he'd returned from his last leave on the Coast. But up to that point, I'd never seen her. Men on the rock quarry detail rarely came close enough to the officer's quarters to see anything.

But now, as I grubbed among the plants and flowers, I could see her only too well!

There was no question about it—she was beautiful, and her lush body reeked of almost-forgotten satisfactions in every indolent movement.

Once or twice her eyes rested on me briefly, but, for a time, I was safe from temptation.

I learned quickly that Dominique had a "number one boy" among the convict-gardeners, a tall, good-looking youngster from Normandy named Rene Martene.

Like myself, Martene was in El Omar for getting in a scrape with an officer and—like all the rest—he'd served his time on the rock pile before being put on the more favored garden detail.

For some weeks now, the blond young soldier had been taking care of the Commandant's garden—and his mistress—with great success.

But, Rene's time was running out. Insatiable, restless Dominique could not content herself with one man very long.

One morning just after I reported for work, one of the other convicts leaned over and whispered with a leer, "Well, *mon ami*, I see that Rene is no longer with us—and I'll bet you fifty to one I knew exactly where he is!"

As we talked quietly, pretending to be busy clearing out weeds around a flowering bush, I kept an eye warily on a giant black guard nicknamed "Bayonet," regularly assigned to the garden detail.

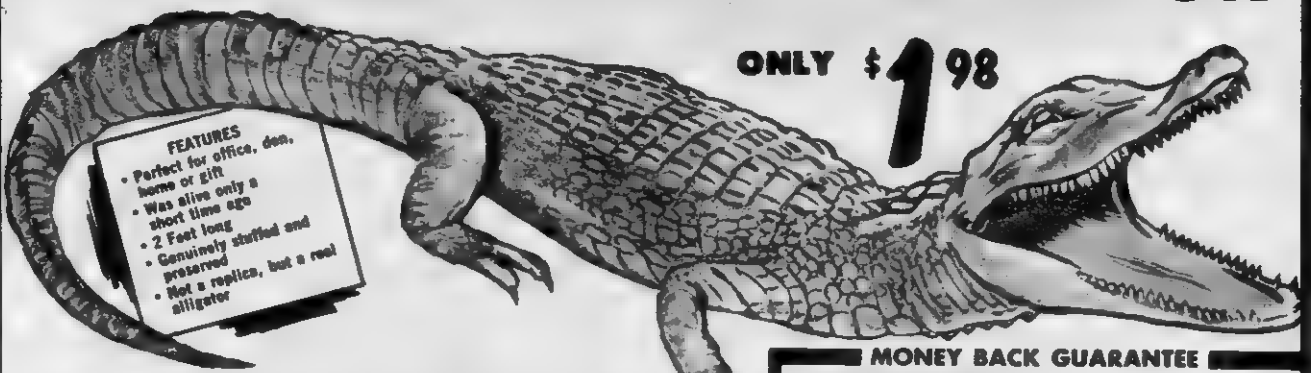
"Bayonet" was a favorite of Dominique and it was apparent that he returned her liking with a dog-like devotion that went far beyond a guard's natural respect for the mistress of the Commandant.

"Bayonet's" peculiar nickname came from his fondness for continually sharpening and polishing a wicked-looking, two-foot-long blade which he carried constantly.

It took little imagination to visualize what torments that blade could inflict in the powerful hands of the ape-like guard, and all the convict-gardeners stayed as far from him as they could.

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Yet hundreds are quietly developing a second source of income—an extra income right now for their spare hours; and a business that can be quickly expanded if it were ever necessary to look to it for complete support.

These "little" home businesses are little only in the sense that they require little capital to start and run, and they require little time on the part of the owner. The margins of profit in some of them are so fantastic as to be almost unbelievable—far greater than those usually enjoyed by big investment manufacturing.

And, there are many kinds and types. For the man who is mechanically inclined there are businesses in which he can use his hands as well as his head. For those who have no aptitude with tools there are small manufacturing operations that are almost automatic in their production methods.

One of the features found in many of these businesses is a wide and ready market for the product. Usually it is a product too small in total national market to attract the attention or envy of the big investors. So, the danger of competition from big operators is absent. Usually it is a product that enjoys a neighborhood demand so that good markets are found in any size community from the small town to the neighborhoods of the big city. Usually the cost of the raw materials is only about one tenth the selling price. One such product costs 11c for raw materials, yet sells readily for \$1.00. Another sells for \$6.50, yet the raw materials cost only 55c. Still another returns \$1.80 for each 27c worth of raw materials.

In the same way that history had its "Minute Men", quietly trained and ready at a moment's notice, so today, we have a constantly growing number of "Ready Men." They are working at steady jobs in offices, stores, factories, gas stations. They have a regular income *now*—an income that only a few months ago was considered both *regular* and *dependable*. But when the signs went up, they started quietly to prepare for independence. They are ready. They have mastered the details of their businesses. They have been making twenty, thirty,

forty, or more dollars a week as *extra* money—now—sometimes with others in the family helping. They have established the outlets for their products. But, more important than their present extra income, they are ready, overnight, to give their full time and to expand their businesses into full-fledged operations at increased income.

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What are these businesses? There are a number. One that is especially interesting and that you can own outright for less than \$175.00 is the manufacture of a product used in quantity in every office and factory in the nation—and by millions of individuals.

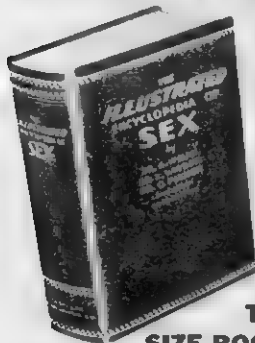
The product is light in weight and can be delivered to customers by mail for just the cost of a few stamps. And 27c worth of material, to which you add nothing but your own time, brings back \$1.80 in cash at retail. The entire "factory" takes so little space that it can be operated on a table top in any spare room, the basement or garage and it is such a simple process that even the junior members of the family can help. The equipment is supplied by The Warner Electric Company who also give seven different methods of selling the output. These methods include a plan by which others sell your product so there is no canvassing needed on your part; another plan by which you sell by mail.

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So as we talked, we made certain the great, surly African was well out of earshot.

"Rene's the third one to go to the hole in two months, thanks to that dirty bitch!" spat the other convict viciously, "... I wonder who'll be next?"

"Not me, you can bet on that, my friend," I responded quickly. "I might enjoy that sexpot—but I'm damned if I'll wind up in solitary because of her!"

Preparing to move away, the convict gave me a parting shot, his lips twisted in a malicious grin, "And what if you wind up there anyway, because you refuse to play, eh?"

A FEW DAYS AFTER Martene's "disappearance," I looked up suddenly from a plant I was placing in the soft, damp earth of the garden, to find Dominique staring down at me.

She was dressed in a flame-colored, almost transparent skirt and a low-cut peasant blouse that displayed her magnificent breasts to full advantage. A cigarette drooped from one corner of her scarlet tinted lips as she spoke to me in a low, throaty voice. "You, there, what's your name?"

I told her, and she repeated it slowly, all the while looking me over as coldly and unconcernedly as if she were buying a horse or a steer—searching for good and bad points! I half expected her to examine my teeth.

Seemingly satisfied with what she saw, she beckoned imperiously. "Come with me! I have a special job for you to do!"

Several of the other convicts raised their heads and quickly lowered them again, but from their expressions I could see they realized I'd been "elected" to the now unoccupied post of "personal attendant."

This was the situation I'd been afraid of, but what was I going to do about it?

As I hesitated on my knees for an instant, Dominique's short temper flamed up. "Did you hear what I said, soldier—or must I call 'Bayonet' to wake you up?"

I had absolutely no choice. Springing to my feet, I followed Dominique's swaying *derriere* up the garden path leading to the house.

As I passed him, I could see the giant black guard's smouldering eyes fixed on me, filled with a terrible hate. Slowly he came along the garden path, following behind me as if I were nothing more than another helpless sheep to be driven to the slaughter.

"The Tigress" had not bothered to look back to see if I was coming, and as I followed behind her, I couldn't help wondering how Dominique could be so brazen in her amours? Surely St. Yves didn't seem like the kind of a man who would want to appear a fool to his prisoners?

And then, with a chill, I realized that his sadistic nature was only amused by the cold-blooded manner in which his mistress took her pleasures among the helpless convicts—and then removed them from the scene forever, via the torture route in the solitary cells.

Yet, in spite of it all, I was filled with an almost uncontrollable desire at the thought of Dominique in my arms.

Entering the house through a side door that led directly to Dominique's rooms, I stared at the garish manner in which she had decorated her apartment. Huge dolls in elaborate costumes were propped up both on chairs and in the corners of a tremendous, ugly yellow sofa. And over near a window, the long, wide couch was covered with a spread lavishly embroidered with some of the most viciously pornographic scenes I had ever seen.

As "Bayonet" started to follow us in, Dominique spoke for the first time since in the garden. "Stay outside, Bayonet!" she said coldly. "I'll call you when it's time to take the prisoner back!"

A sound like a low moan mixed with helpless rage came from the huge figure, "but, Mademoiselle—Mademoiselle..."

"Out, you pig!" she blazed, "do you wish me to report you to the Commandant for being disrespectful?"

Trembling, though filled with fury, "Bayonet" backed out and closed the door.

I was alone with the "Tigress of El Omar"—and my mind and my body were at total war with each other!

"Sit down for a moment, you must be tired from working in the hot sun of the garden," said Dominique silkily, gesturing towards the huge sofa. "I'll bring you a drink, eh?" I sat down.

LYING IN MY ARMS, her blouse now at the danger point, and stroking my face with one rose-tipped hand, Dominique said purringly, "I have another, more intimate room, you know. Perhaps you can find something very pleasant to do for me there, too?"

Suddenly, like a dash of cold water in my face, I awoke to danger.

"I... I must... get back to my job, Mademoiselle... the guards..."

Tilting back her long, lovely throat, Dominique laughed in a deep, growling way, like the animal she was, "Ridiculous, *cheri*—I give the orders around here, and don't you forget it!"

She sprang to her feet in one swift motion, pulling me after her. As if she was dragging a dog on a leash, she led me from the room—and moments later she was all over me, eager and demanding as she bit and scratched and spurred me on to new heights of ecstasy.

And then it was over... and we

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The foregoing are facts...facts you can easily verify if you care to check with any insurance company or any law office. And it explains why even beginners in the field of Claim Investigating can count on a good starting salary of as high as \$400 a month.

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were lying together on the tumbled sheets in the cool, dark room, smoking cigarettes and not talking. It was another world.

Drowsily, carelessly, Dominique dug a firmly-fleshed elbow in my side.

"Darling, it's *such* a shame—but I do think you'd better go back to your flower pots. Now run along. I'll see you tomorrow, perhaps."

Finished with me for the moment, Dominique lazily rolled over on her side, stubbed out her cigarette on a beautifully hand-carved bedside table, and calmly prepared to take a nap.

And I—prisoner, stud and dupe—climbed slowly back into my prison denims and, trembling with exhaustion, walked slowly back into the garden.

As I expected, "Bayonet" was waiting—and the great blade was weaving like a snake in one huge, black hand. His eyes glittering with an openly savage desire to rip out my guts with his razor-sharp knife, the giant guard advanced on me menacingly—as I hurried, half-running, back down the path to where the other convict gardeners were watching me curiously.

As I fell back on my knees in the dirt I heard one mutter, "How was it, eh? You do look a little tired, *mon vieux!*"

"Shut up!" I shot back in a whispered growl, and went on with my weeding, my mind a whirl of confusion.

For a few weeks I, like my predecessors, lived in a trance-like state. Every day I went through wild love-making. And the rest of the time, whether at my gardening duties or at night in my cell, my brain was busy reliving the delicious moments I spent with the "Tigress."

It was a mad, crazy existence that couldn't last—and didn't.

One afternoon, as we were lying, spent and tired in Dominique's spacious bed, I found her eyeing me with the glazed, contemptuous look of a cat that has had sufficient cream for the time. She was bored, and showed it.

The only excuse I can offer is that I was nearly completely exhausted. But regardless of the cause, I made an almost-fatal mistake.

"What's the matter, Dominique?" I sneered, "... are you looking for a new playmate to help you through your afternoons?"

Instantly her body arched in rage. "Get out of here, you filthy swine!" she hissed, her eyes wide and filled with fury, "... and you'll soon wish you'd kept your tongue between your teeth, I can assure you of that!"

Not even bothering to throw a robe about her naked form, she bounded to the door and called, "Bayonet."

"Take this *thing*," she indicated me with a distasteful jerk of her thumb, "... take this animal to the proper cage ... you understand, 'Bayonet'?"

"Certainly, with the greatest pleasure, Mademoiselle," leered the giant. "I've had a special little place reserved for him for some time now!" He actually giggled with anticipation.

Turning away from me as if I'd never existed, Dominique slammed the door and I could faintly hear the clack of her mules on the stone floor as she walked slowly back to her rooms.

A white hot pain stabbed me in the side.

"This way, my little pigeon," rumbled a now wild-eyed and shivering 'Bayonet,' "I can't wait to show you your new home—and you'd better take a good look at the sunshine and the flowers while you can, because you're not going to be seeing them again!"

As we walked out through the garden, the huge guard a step behind me, the other convict gardeners bent industriously over their jobs. Not one even dared to acknowledge my presence.

We passed through the main gate, continued across the compound and up to the steel door that led down into the dreaded underground solitary row.

As the door opened with a protesting squeal of rusty hinges, I felt the knife pressing harder against my back, and I almost stumbled as I entered the blackness of the cell corridor.

AS THE OUTER DOOR swung closed, there was only a deadly silence. A few steps brought me up to a blank door with a little peephole in it.

From his belt, "Bayonet" took a huge key, turned the lock and then I was shoved violently into a bare room, containing nothing but a board bunk along one wall and a rusty bucket in one corner.

On the wall directly opposite the bunk was a steel plate, to which were riveted leg and arm irons. And, within minutes, I was locked in them, trussed to the wall, standing and helpless!

"Just so you won't be *too* lonely, scum," said "Bayonet" with an unholy grin spreading over his face, "I can promise you that Mademoiselle and I will pay you a visit this evening, and often for a while to come. We'll try to keep you entertained!" Then he strode out of the cell and slammed the door.

There was a small ventilator near the top of the cell and after a while I fancied I heard a weak voice coming from it.

"Who's there?" whispered the voice faintly, "... this is Martene ... Rene Martene ... who are you?"

"It's me, ——" I called out, "... how are you doing, Rene?"

"Can't last ... much longer ..." the voice drifted back, just barely audible, "... beatings ... every night ... Dominique and 'Bayonet' ... can't ..." the voice died out in

a sobbing, almost inaudible mumble.

The hours passed, dragged, crept by one by one. And then I heard them coming! The cell door was suddenly flung open and the blinding beam of a flashlight struck me in the face.

Behind its brilliance I could just make out the huge form of "Bayonet" and the tall, slim figure of Dominique.

In her right hand she was holding a three-thonged leather whip, with lead tips on each thong. Her fingers were pulsing convulsively about the handle and her breath was coming in pants, almost as if she were in the grip of an uncontrollable lust. Her eyes were frightening, remorseless, with no pupils visible in their black depths. Her mouth was twisted into a line of hate as she raised the whip and swung savagely with all her might at my face.

Locked to the wall, hand and foot, I couldn't protect myself in the slightest—and after a few strokes my blood was running freely from head, chest, arms and stomach. Hot lines of pain were hammering through my body, and it took every ounce of will-power I possessed to keep from screaming.

And all the while, obscenities, known only to the inmates of the Coast brothels, poured from Dominique's raving mouth. As the lashing mounted in fury, I felt my body going limp from shock and the loss of blood. And then, mercifully, a black wave rose up and I knew nothing more.

As if from a great distance, I seem to remember hearing Dominique howl out in fury, "Don't worry, fool, I'll be back . . . and back . . . and back . . . until you're dead!"

HOW MANY DAYS THE beatings went on I do not know. Time had ceased to exist. There was nothing but an infinite, alternate series of pain and blessed unconsciousness, and occasionally a tortured swallow of water and a chew of sour, stale bread and cheese.

Martene, I knew instinctively, was dead.

One last savage beating had left him hanging in his chains—and I vaguely remember that when the day guard on duty came to let him down on his bunk he was lifeless.

Even the guards accustomed to brutality were revolted by Dominique's savagery against the helpless men in the solitary cells—but they were afraid to make any complaint to the Commandant. He was still too obviously attached to his mad mistress.

But then, the miracle happened. One night Dominique appeared alone. With the whip, of course—and the curses. But just as she began ripping into my already running wounds, "Bayonet" did show up—dead drunk!

Something seemed to have changed him. He was belligerent and swaying,

his eyes fixed lustfully on Dominique as her bosom rose and fell with the exertion of her whipping.

Suddenly, in spite of the pain, I knew what to do. I might be killed, but what of it—I would die anyway, if this insane beating kept up!

Through blood-spattered, bruised and swollen lips I shouted to the liquor-inflamed native, "Why don't you see if you can satisfy this crazy woman? Nobody else can, maybe you're the man for it, eh?"

At my words, Dominique screamed in rage and smashed blow after blow over my face and body—but I'd gotten through to "Bayonet"!

All the pent-up longing and lust; all the years of resentment towards her, born out of her contemptuous treatment of him as nothing but a "great black ape" boiled over in the huge guard's liquor-sodden, semi-savage mind.

"Yes!" he roared, pounding on his barrel chest. "You European men, you weaklings, you haven't got what she needs, but I have—and now I'll show you!" Stumbling forward, he grabbed Dominique by her left wrist with a huge paw.

Terror-stricken, the girl swung at his lust-contorted face with her whip, opening his skin to the cheekbone.

But the mighty guard paid no more attention than if he had been stung by a flea. Dragging her out of my sight, as she fought and scratched like a wildcat, he staggered towards an empty cell all the way down the corridor.

The whole area was suddenly filled with inhuman shrieks, moans and wild sobbings. Then finally, there was silence, unbroken except for the

THE DEADLIEST CARGO (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31)

came from Windy's eyes. I'd started to say something to him about the weather, but stopped when I saw his narrowed, suddenly hard gaze. As I turned towards the steps from the galley to see what he was looking at, he kicked out at me with all his might, catching me squarely in the small of my back! I crashed down on the deck, shaking my head in a daze. Slowly I looked up again—and stared straight into the black barrel of a .45!

Windy's face was like an iceberg, cold, fierce and twisted. Even his voice sounded different. "Alright joker—on your feet," he grunted.

I hesitated maybe only a second or two—but it was too long for Windy. He kicked me once more—in the groin. I crumpled again, unable to stifle the scream of searing agony that tore from my throat.

Another shriek echoed from below. It was Madge. She was just coming up the stairs, her face white and her eyes wide with fright. Sunny was behind her, a gleaming bread knife in her hand, prodding her forward with short, wicked jabs.

We shouted each other's names simultaneously. Then we were facing

heavy rasping breathing of "Bayonet."

Soon his mighty form filled the door to my cell again.

In his hand was the fearsome bayonet, its shine now covered by the deep stain of blood.

"You were right!" his booming voice thundered with all the rampant savagery of his ancestors. "... I have made her know a man . . . and death . . . She said she would rather die than have me touch her . . . so she got her wish . . . after I had mine!"

Suddenly his huge figure slumped over—liquor and the woman had overpowered him.

As I stood chained, watching his body slump to the floor of the corridor, I heard the clump of boots as other guards stormed into the cell block.

One grizzled old veteran, who had passed the body of Dominique lying twisted in death in the cell down the corridor, raised his pistol deliberately and, taking careful aim, shot "Bayonet" through the head.

"And that's the end of this whole mess," he said quietly, as other guards hastily started to get me out of the irons.

The Tigress of El Omar was dead—and I was leaving the solitary cells. Soon my prison term would be finished and I'd be returned to duty once more. As they say, time heals all wounds—at least most wounds. The whip scars on my back are only thin, red lines now . . .

But never in my life will I be able to forget that wild, beautiful, mad creature who lived as violently as she died, Dominique, ecstatic lover—the lady with a whip. ● ● ●

each other, I with a gun at my spine and Madge with a knife at hers. Windy's face twisted in a half-leering grin and he motioned Sunny to move my wife away from the railing. "Nice goin' kid," he snorted.

Then the leer disappeared, and the hard look came into his eyes again. Sunny, too, had that brittle, far-away gaze. Something peculiar was obviously going on in their minds.

WINDY STARTED barking commands. "Turn her around—face to the wall. And keep her covered!" He turned to me to savor my expression, then resumed his orders.

"Well, honey," he asked, winking broadly at Sunny, "what say we give our hosts a bit of entertainment?"

Madge was clad only in shorts and halter. As if by signal, Sunny slashed upward with the knife. I shouted and started to lunge forward, but was stopped by a clout across the neck from the .45 that sent me gagging and reeling. From where I was sprawled on the deck, I saw the glistening ribbon of red trickle down the smooth sun-tanned skin of Madge's back!

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Just cutting the halter hadn't been enough for Sunny. Savagely, she had run her knife across Madge from the small of her back to the base of her neck! The poor girl yelped like a wounded pup and pressed forward sobbing, her body tight against the bulkhead as she fought to stifle the pain. The loose ends of her halter, now wet with blood, hung limply, but the halter stayed on. Sunny's face was distorted with pleasure!

"Move back from that wall," Windy shouted angrily. "Then turn around!"

Dazed, I could only watch in numb horror. Slowly, Madge turned, and the halter fell away. I could see my wife quivering with fear and pain. Sunny looked expectantly at Windy, who nodded tersely in reply. Then she sliced again, this time down the length of Madge's shorts!

I tried to force my wife's screams out of my mind, but it was impossible. My eyes were riveted to her thigh where another stream of blood was starting. With a sudden ripping motion, Sunny tore the remaining shred of clothing off!

As Madge cowered, trying to cover her nakedness, crying hysterically, Windy handed the gun to Sunny. I looked at the blonde's face. A small line of spittle had gathered in the corner of her mouth—her eyes were shining with expectancy.

As long as I live, I'll never forget those next fifteen minutes. Like a primitive animal, Windy took my wife before my very eyes!

Every time I moved, I received another stunning blow from the gun stock. By the time he finished, the side of my head was a throbbing mass of raw welts, and I was gagging in revulsion and burning with a hatred I never knew I could possess.

Once when Madge passed out, Windy slapped her back to consciousness. "I don't want you to miss a bit of this, honey!" And all the while Sunny stood there, writhing in ecstasy at the brutal spectacle.

Later, Sunny dragged Madge bodily down the stairs, and I was pushed viciously after her. I went to my wife and lifted her bruised and bleeding body into the bunk, while the sadistic pair taunted me with obscene remarks.

Madge was unconscious for more than an hour. When she finally came to, her eyes sought mine with the most anguished look I've ever seen on the face of any human being. I knew what was in her mind, and comforted her as well as I could, whispering softly, trying to be close to her even though Sunny was standing over us hardly a yard away with the gun.

"Madge—darling—it's going to be all right. Don't worry, everything's just the same between us. As long as we keep loving each other, everything will turn out okay . . ."

It took hours before that glazed look began to leave her eyes and when Windy came down again, it

was all I could do to keep from leaping at his throat, gun or no gun. But I couldn't take the chance. Not with Madge at his mercy if I failed.

"Now listen, and listen straight," the pirate snarled. "You're gonna follow the channel straight out and head for the Thousand Island group. If you do exactly what I say, maybe I won't touch your missus anymore. But any funny business, and there'll be a repeat performance—only this time I won't be so gentle. And then the two of you'll be dropped overboard with anchors tied to your legs. I can always handle this boat myself if I have to!"

HE WAS IN THE driver's seat, and we knew it. Neither Madge nor I could do a thing. At the first sign of independence the trigger-happy punk was ready to blow his top. So I swung the wheel over and headed straight out into the Gulf, heading for the Keys to the south.

Sunny stayed with Madge, and Windy covered me. I was surprised they kept us alive. The boat was so easy to control in good weather that they could take it anywhere they wanted to go themselves, without the slightest trouble.

My insides were raging in hot anger and frustration. I was almost sick with it. I just couldn't push those horrible moments out of my brain. But I knew that if I let my emotions get the best of me, I'd never live to get even. I had no idea why they wanted to go down to the great group of Keys, but could figure out two courses open to them once we got there. They could kill us, or maroon us on an uninhabited key and make off with the boat. But I wasn't going to worry about that, right then. We were still alive. For the moment that would have to be enough.

Swallowing my anger, I tried to talk to Windy, but he jabbed the gun into my back and barked, "Keep your damned mouth shut! I'll tell you exactly what course to follow." Then I realized he'd been down this coast before, and had some particular objective in mind.

Luberta had never been a speedy boat, her designer having placed primary emphasis on comfort and seaworthiness. I knew we would be hours reaching the islands. After some thought, I tried tickling Windy's vanity by very formally requesting permission to speak. When this was granted, I suggested that we'd all be better off if we would sit below and let the old girl make the run on automatic. After a while, he decided to adopt my suggestion. Obviously, he had everything under control, and standing there for several hours could get mighty tiresome, even for a man with a gun.

I was glad to get that pistol out of the small of my back, yet when I glanced about, I could see that he still held it pointed squarely at my spine. His young face was as hard as flint.

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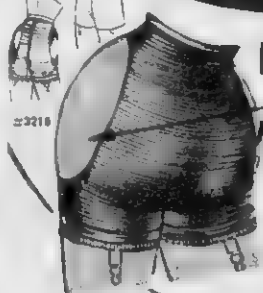
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Fortunately for us, the gas tanks were almost full. I knew they would never have consented to stop at a marine station to refuel. I cursed myself for having been sentimental enough to have picked them up in the first place. Lord knows, there had been enough warnings against hitchhikers published in the last few years. But I was damned well going to get back at them, or die in the attempt.

The hours dragged by. Madge was resting comfortably in the bunk, still too weak to walk.

During that afternoon, I spotted a couple of fishing boats directly in our path, about a hundred feet apart. Although I was tempted I knew better than to try to signal, or obviously swing around them, so I held to a course midway between the craft.

An hour or so later, Windy began to get restless. We were all up on deck now, Madge huddled in blankets against the bulkhead, shivering despite the warmth.

Turning to Sunny, Windy suddenly said, "Go on down now and bring up our little pet."

I thought Sunny looked a little shocked, and that in itself was disturbing. It would take a hell of a lot to ruffle that one. She began to protest, "It's too soon, Windy!"

But he repeated grimly, "Bring him up here—now."

SUNNY DUCKED BELOW, and after a moment was back on deck, clutching an odd-looking little cage in her hand. It couldn't have been more than six inches square, and must have been concealed in her suitcase when she came aboard. She handled it gingerly, as if she were afraid that it might explode. There was a carrying handle on top of the crude, screen-wire affair, and a sliding metal door on one side.

Windy snatched at the cage and started talking to its almost invisible occupant, in a strange, sickeningly-sweet tone, all the while keeping his gun pointed at me. In spite of that, curiosity got the better of me. I turned and got a good look at what was inside. A dead coral snake!

For all the lack of sense I had shown previously, I had brains enough to know that this tiny pink reptile, black-headed and no bigger around than a pencil, was perhaps the deadliest serpent on earth! His venom was far more murderous than that of the largest rattlesnake. It could paralyze all the nerve centers of the body and stop the heart instantly, as fast as a deep whiff of deadly cyanide gas.

Windy just sat there with the little cage before him, apparently fascinated by the antics of its occupant. Then, like a flash, I realized that this young killer-rapist intended to turn the snake loose before they left the boat! If he was trying to scare us by letting our imaginations run wild, he was succeeding admirably.

As the afternoon wore on, Windy started studying the indentations of

the islets with an eye that showed he knew exactly where he was going. Just after dusk, he suddenly sang out, "Alright loverboy, swing in between those two keys, and then take it easy. I'll tell you where to anchor!"

Half an hour later, after some deliberate navigation, winding among the tiny islands, he ordered me to kill the engines and drop the hook. We were now lying in a neck-deep channel surrounded on all sides by a maze of keys. Beyond the mangrove thickets lining the shores, I could see no evidence of any human habitation.

As soon as we hove to at anchor, Windy sent Sunny down for their bags. After they dropped them in our dinghy, the two of them jumped down. As Windy cast off the skiff's painter, he hurled the little cage right onto the floor of the deckhouse!

Even in the deep twilight, I could see that the door of the cage had been opened. As they rowed away, I heard Windy's mocking laugh echoing back, and impotent hatred surged into my mouth with a bitter, green taste.

From the cage the most beautiful—and most deadly—thread of living coral I have ever seen wriggled forth. It made no effort to attack us. Rather, it slithered away instantly down between the ribs of the hull and disappeared in the direction of the engine room.

The snake was gone. But even so, we were helpless. He could be anywhere. The slightest move on our part could bring him at us. For the moment, I could only sit quietly, comforting Madge, watching Windy and Sunny move shoreward. They finally slipped into a little channel and tied up. I could hear them thrashing through the undergrowth for a while, but after that, all was silent.

Feebly, Madge whispered, "We've got to get that snake—before he gets us..."

SHE WAS RIGHT, of course. The slender reptile was in the engine room, but from there he could slide through the tiniest of apertures into either cabin, or even back up into the deckhouse. If we tried to get away, the very act of starting the engine would be certain to cause him to move to another compartment... any compartment. And contact with him meant death.

I knew that, yet I dreaded the thought of going down into the engine room to hunt for the coral killer. All odds were with the snake—down there I would only be able to crawl.

But there was no help for it, and I found I was fortified by the tremendous anger that had been building up in me. Now, at least, I could take some action...

I picked up the little cage and seized a short stick. Then I raised the engine room hatch and in the dim afterglow looked carefully about. There was no sign of a snake.

I asked Madge to hand me a flashlight, and lowered myself carefully

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down. Still I saw nothing, and was conscious only of the healthy, hot smell of engine oil about our power plant.

Suddenly, I saw the snake's shiny black head rise up. His body was partly covered by bilge water, but his beady little eyes appeared fascinated by the glare of the 5-cell flashlight, and he had ceased to move.

Inching as close as I dared, I had to decide whether to attempt to get the little devil back into the cage, or try to kill him with the piece of wood. I had to make up my mind quickly.

The way he held quiet in the blinding light decided me. It just might hold him fascinated long enough to permit me to make my play. Pinpointing him in the spotlight, I dropped the stick, drew a long breath, and then slammed the open door of the cage down over that wicked little black head! After that I had no choice. It was either his life or ours. I bore down in the six inches of water until I could see his head and most of his body rise up within the cage.

Instinctively, he fought to keep his head above that oily salt water, and in another moment all of his slender length was up inside the wire netting. Then I reached carefully below and slipped the sliding door shut!

For a while I just lay there, conscious only of how nice it was to have the snake caged again, and with no drop of his venom in my veins.

Almost at once Madge called from above, "Are you all right?" and I was most happy to inform her that I had the coral snake where he wouldn't hurt anyone—at least not for the moment...

As soon as I had climbed into the deckhouse again I set the little cage carefully down and began peeling off my outer clothing and tying my shoes about my neck.

Madge asked me what I was going to do. I told her I was going ashore to bring back my dinghy. I didn't tell her my real purpose. She protested. "You know these waters. They're dangerous to swim in, and Windy has a gun. Let's get out of here!"

PERHAPS I SHOULD have listened to her. But a fellow will do anything when he gets mad enough. I seized the cage in one hand and slipped into the tepid water. Keeping the snake out of water, I made the best time I could ashore. I knew these waters, and was most grateful to reach the stern of the moored dinghy without incident. I set the cage on a thwart in the skiff, clambered in, and got ashore. Then I put on my shoes.

Picking up the little cage, I followed what appeared to be a little-used path through the palmettos. After perhaps a hundred yards I stopped dead. There, just ahead of me, was what appeared to be the wall of a small shack. A glimmer of light came through the window facing me.

As noiselessly as possible, I worked my way up to the window. Beyond the edge of the drawn blind I found I could look inside.

There were four people, seated about a small table. On the table were stacked some twenty cylinders. Windy and Sunny were there, and two men I had never seen before.

One of the strangers was looking at his watch, and I could pick up some of his words. I got the general gist of the conversation. They wished to convert the contraband—those cylinders apparently contained narcotics—into cash when their boat arrived, then be put ashore at Naples, where I guessed they would hire a car and drive to Miami. It was a good setup. And the thought of that other boat coming in while I was ashore made it essential that I do what I had to do as soon as possible.

The only weapon I had, of course, was the little coral snake, and Windy himself had taught me how to use it. By now, I could hear the little devil in a frenzy at the rough treatment he had been receiving.

Leaning down, I picked up a rock and smashed the window pane. Then I yanked the blind up, slid the cage door back, and even before the smugglers could shout, heaved the snake right onto the table!

Instantly, the tiny demon was out of his cell! Windy instinctively reached for the dope, but the snake was faster. The deadly fangs sank into his wrist. I knew that would be all for Windy, but I couldn't wait to see what happened next. One of the men was shooting at the window, and I could hear the other tearing at the door latch. Sunny was gripping Windy's arm and screaming like a crazy woman!

I ran like a scared rabbit back to the dinghy and was thankful none of the slugs found their mark. The dark protected me. Neither the other fellow nor Sunny appeared, and I knew where Windy was.

I jumped aboard, threw off the mooring, and pulled with all my might for Luberta. Leaping aboard, I assured Madge everything was O.K., but didn't stop for further talk. I grabbed a knife and slashed through our anchor rope.

Back in the deckhouse, I revved up the engines and we really roared out of that channel. Then suddenly, I made out the outline of another craft ahead, feeling its way slowly in from the Gulf. Like ourselves, it had no lights burning. Just in time, I swung around the big cruiser. It didn't follow, and I figured they would check with those on the key before coming after us. That gave us a little bit of a head start.

By then we were running up the coast with everything the engines could push out. I wished mightily for a two-way radio, so I could contact the Coast Guard. As it was, we had to make the run all the way to Naples before reporting to the cutter stationed there.

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AT NAPLES I RAN into the harbor, weaved among the fleet of anchored fish boats, and made directly for the long, gray Coast Guard cutter moored at the dock. When I shouted, the boys seized my lines and the skipper appeared on deck. In a few words I told him what had happened to us, what the smugglers' boat looked like, and about where I thought it should be.

He looked at me curiously for a moment, then gave his orders. The ship came to life. Within minutes it was leaving the harbor. We took *Luberta* out among the anchored craft, dug in the hook and prepared for the night. Madge kept crying, and I kept trying to comfort her. But there are some wounds that just won't heal.

It seemed a long time till dawn. I rolled out then and looked shoreward. There was the cutter, moored at her dock. Alongside her was tied a cruiser.

The skipper came to the rail. He looked tired. "Thought you'd be

over," he said. "They tried to outrun us but we had too much speed for them. The whole gang is in the lock-up." Then he gave me a funny look, "except for those two the doc says died of coral snake bite—that young bastard who . . . that punk and the blonde."

It was fate. "This Castle and the girl never knew what hit 'em. All I ask of you now is to stick around for the coroner's inquest tomorrow, O.K.?"

We could stand a little layover. I didn't want to view any corpses, but when a cop says "Please" he's just being nice.

Of one thing I was certain. Never again did I want to see the shiny black head of a coral snake—not even if it was pickled in alcohol. I knew I would dream of being down in that engine room with the little devil, and I knew exactly how Windy felt when the reptile got him. He *did* have time to know what had hit him. And I was glad for that. ● ● ●

SUICIDE SUB (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

crew was already preparing the forward torpedo tube!

The Japanese commander began a zig-zag course, but it was too late. A torpedo roared into his rudder, detonating the depth charges stored under the fan tail. The destroyer blew into a million pieces!

THE REMAINING destroyer swung around—determined to avenge her sister ship. She completed the turn and came charging toward the *Tang*, evidently intent on ramming the American sub. Now, the *Tang* was at a disadvantage, on the defensive . . .

O'Kane made a lightning decision. The fog had partially lifted, but there were still large patches remaining. A particularly large one was close by, and it seemed a likely place in which to play "hide and seek." *Tang* swung into the fog. The job now was to lure the destroyer close enough for the kill.

The sub halted . . . its diesel quieted . . . waiting . . . O'Kane, now below, was at the radar. He turned a fan-shaped wheel slowly, searchingly. There was no response. He waited a moment longer before taking his eyes away from the surface of the green cathode tube. Then he turned the operation over to a technician.

"Ship in our sights, sir! Direct bow crossing," the technician said, suddenly. O'Kane verified, then spoke quietly into the microphone. A torpedo shot forth on a journey of destruction. He waited tensely for the missile to travel the three hundred yards. *Nothing happened!* Something had gone wrong!

Suddenly, O'Kane's face twisted in horror. "Left full rudder, emergency!" he bellowed. *Tang*, her engines laboring desperately, pivoted sharply. Her own torpedo was skimming towards her at cannon ball speed!

For some unknown reason the gyro

mechanism had gone haywire, causing the deadly torpedo to travel in a circle just short of the target! It was returning to the exact spot from where it had been fired, headed for the *Tang* at a point directly below the bridge.

There was no panic. Instead, the crew stood speechless—helpless, their eyes locked with incredible fascination on the rapidly approaching engine of destruction.

The *Tang* was moving rapidly by then, but the experienced submariners knew instinctively that they were going to be hit—in seconds.

O'Kane shouted desperately, but there was hardly time to carry out an order. The watch managed to unleash one inflatable life raft that had been secured topside—a second before the torpedo struck!

Inside, everything had been almost serene. The crew was practically unaware of impending disaster. But with the explosion from above, men leaped to their emergency posts as if they were motivated by electrical charges. Lt. Larry Savadkin jumped toward the open conning tower hatch. Below, in the body of the sub, the men on duty were already spinning the hatch door shut.

Savadkin's move was hopeless. He hadn't moved three feet before the Gib charge of the torpedo blasted into the aft torpedo room—killing all hands stationed there and flooding the three adjoining compartments. The officer was thrown to the floor. By the time he had picked himself up, the *Tang* was already sinking. Water gushed in a torrent through the open conning tower.

Savadkin jumped for the opening, fought his way through the drenching inpour and reached the surface—the last man to get out before the ship went down. He was hauled aboard the life raft by the surviving members of the top-side watch.

INSIDE, THOSE of the crew still alive worked with frantic speed. The three aft compartments were hurriedly sealed off, but things were in horrible shape. The ship was sinking rapidly, stern first—at an angle that made an escape practically impossible.

First things came first. The forward ballast tanks were deliberately flooded. The diving mechanism was out—and the maneuver meant that the ship could never rise again—but at least it levelled out and held steady.

Gradually, all survivors were brought together in the forward control room to take stock of the situation. In addition to the aft torpedo room, the engine room and the general supply were flooded. So too were radio, and upper observation.

But there was emergency electric power and food—plenty of food. And, most important of all—the escape buoys were workable.

Chief Engineer Mears was the hero of the group. Although his arm was broken, he went from man to man, comforting, cheering—offering hope of escape to all.

Possibly, most might have gotten out if a new problem hadn't arisen—a fire! The men retreated again toward the forward torpedo room, sealing hatches behind them. All fire fighting equipment was out. But the heat was building up rapidly.

Seven men, selected by lot, were given the first chance at the escape buoys. But Chief Mears, one of the seven, turned down his chance, ordering that a youngster go instead.

Fumes were building up, seeping into the torpedo room through air ducts. And the bulkhead paint was peeling from the heat. As the seven took their places, they could see that the gasket around the door was at melting point...

Nothing is known of what took place below after the ascent of the seven. But it is assumed that shortly afterwards, the gasket gave way and the twenty-eight remaining men were asphyxiated.

The seven lucky crewmen surfaced on an empty ocean. The deck group had been previously picked up by the Jap destroyer. By then they were undergoing savage torture and starvation before being taken to a POW camp.

The group of seven men drifted helplessly for days, before being picked up by a friendly vessel.

The *Tang* had died. In all, only nine of her crew lived through the war to tell the story.

Hers had been a short life, just one year. But what a year! The *Tang* and O'Kane compiled the most outstanding record of damage and destruction ever credited to a submarine. Twenty-four enemy ships was the official score. But now she was dead, a victim of a faulty torpedo.

Perhaps some consolation can be found in the fact that the Nips had nothing to do with her death... she was too tough for them. • • •



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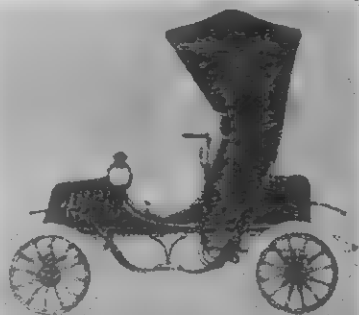


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THE COCKTAIL HOUR PROSTITUTES

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37)

forty dollars. Many commuters privately rant about this "love in a hurry" situation, but the suckers always come back for more—and more—and more . . .

Chicago dolls are reported to be a bit more leisurely and more eager to please. The L. A. girls rate highest in youth and beauty; since their ranks are crammed with hungry, would-be starlets. They are the most "gracious" of all—for who knows—this particular customer might have studio connections.

In a well-known New York bar, within stumbling distance of an equally well-known train terminal, you'll find Shirley T., a knockout blonde. Her lean, yet voluptuous figure is always tightly sheathed in revealing dresses. Her hair glitters. And her lechery knows no bounds—if the price is right.

As an example of her "activities," take the hot Friday afternoon of last July 25th, when Shirley picked up Herbert K. Herbert, art department head of an advertising agency specializing in TV commercials, is well heeled. He built his own home in suburban Connecticut, has a pretty wife, two cars and two pre-teen children. On that afternoon he'd left his office early, and stopped at the bar for a couple of quick ones before train time.

One look at Shirley changed his immediate plans. He spotted her for what she was—and moved in. She smiled when he offered to buy her a drink, saying softly:

"It'll cost you thirty-five bucks, handsome."

He ordered the drinks, then asked, "Where?"

"Closer than you think."

Out on the street, walking with flashy, glamorous Shirley, he felt self-conscious. His eyes kept darting about, fearful that some friend or business associate might spot him. One look at her, and they'd know exactly what he was up to.

But Shirley led him quickly into the busy lobby of an office building. People were walking in and out in droves. They crowded into an elevator and were shot up to the 18th floor. Shirley unlocked a door, and Herbert saw a beautifully furnished office reception room. No one was in it—the air conditioning was delightful. Shirley made sure the door was securely fastened, then led him along a corridor lined with filing cabinets. In passing, he opened two of them—they were empty.

"A neat front," he said to Shirley's undulating back. She tossed a smile over her shoulder.

The syndicate Shirley worked for had modernized vice to meet the needs of the atomic age. No loss of motion or time. Bar to bed—a la 1958—in a plush office suite. The ceilings were soundproofed and thick carpeting was underfoot. Not a sound came

from the row of closed doors along the corridor.

A door latch clicked behind Herbert. He turned and saw a fully dressed, stunning redhead step from a room. A man quietly followed her. There was no drunken laughter, no feminine chuckles. Just the sordid business of selling soft flesh for hard cash.

Shirley stopped before another door, inserted a key and went in. Herbert followed her and closed the door. He was beginning to wonder how he could get out of the mood of this hospital atmosphere—then Shirley slipped out of her dress. She stood before him in wispy, translucent bra and panties. Nodding toward a tray on the table, she purred, "I have only scotch, with water, soda or straight." Then she put her arms around his neck and pressed against him. "How do you want it?"

ON A LESS ELABORATE scale, this is happening at other terminals all over the country. The commuters never had it so good—so they think. Some business men now habitually knock-off an hour earlier for a couple of quick ones—one being liquor.

And the commuters' wives never had it so good. Never in all history have they received so many presents! Terminal drug stores do a land-office business in candy and perfumes. For home-bound hubby, now steeped in remorse, thinks fondly—and guiltily—of the little woman. His guilt prods him to take home a present. Of course, the wives are delighted, and will continue to be—till they read this.

The busiest chippies operate around the train and bus terminals with lines to shore points. During the summer months many husbands rent shore bungalows for their families. The beaches are too far away for daily commuting, so the husbands become "summer bachelors."

All rumors to the contrary, this "summer bachelor" business is not what it is cracked up to be. The bachelor's home is watched by a host of nosey, hawk-eyed neighbors. Just let him get home late a few nights or just once stagger up his steps—his "neighborly" neighbors will lose no time in telling wifey all about it.

The cocktail hour prostitutes know all about this, and come Friday afternoon, they flock to the bars near the terminals. They know that hubby, after a week without his wife, is in a goatish frame of mind. Also, Friday night is usually pay night—the combination is a gold mine to the commuter-minded dolls. And hubby arrives down at the shore slightly worse for wear—from "working in the hot city" all week, of course.

The St. Louis "C-girls" have even another gimmick—they operate in wolf packs. Theirs is the most novel procedure of all. While these sin chicks are not as coldly businesslike

as the New York trollops, they're more persistent. They work in a team of three—a blonde, a redhead, and a brunette. Bartenders at the commuter taverns call them the "Triple Threat." And they are. The commuter doesn't have a chance—even if he wanted one.

These lust-minded babes select a mark—and move in on him . . . one at a time. The blonde approaches him first, say, and makes her provocative pitch. If he's agreeable—off they go. If he isn't, the brunette tries her luck. The averages are that the second girl hits pay dirt. The first one plants the suggestive seed in the man's mind, and that seed doesn't need much tending to blossom. But if he's stubborn, it's ten to one the redhead will turn the trick, usually whispering a few choice appetizers.

The St. Louis "team" splits up each take, and rotates in order of approach. There are some vicious cat fights when a "loner" moves in on the working plan of a team. In a place where the team is solid with the bartender, (cutting him in on the take), the loner usually winds up with a mickey in her martini.

NOT ONLY IN ST. LOUIS, Chicago, L. A. and New York, but all over the country the population movement is toward the suburbs. As the trend continues, metropolitan terminus points are rapidly becoming centers of flourishing prostitution.

Shirley and her syndicated sisters are already getting competition from the amateurs.

One such amateur in the commuter trade has already made a quick jump to top pro rating. Her name is Eunice R., and she was born in western Pennsylvania. Eunice was big for a fourteen-year-old (in the right places) and easily won a home-town beauty contest. Her Mom, as empty-headed as Eunice, began to build dream castles in far-off Hollywood.

The big stumbling block to these grand plans was Pop, but Mom be-deviled him into giving up his job and hitching his wagon to his daughter's star. The young fellows in the home town hated to see Eunice leave, for she was the kind of high-tension babe who rapidly separated the boys from the men.

Once in Los Angeles, Pop couldn't hold a job, because he took out his bitterness against his wife on his fellow workers. On the sly, he wrote to his old boss back in Pennsylvania, and the answer told him that his old job was waiting for him. He put the cards on the table to Mom: he was going back; she could come or stay as she damn well pleased. Mom, seeing her meal ticket about to vanish, went back. Eunice stayed on at her cigarette-girl job in a small night spot.

By day the buxom beauty haunted Central Casting. To pay for her expensive photographs she let men drive her home at night—parking on the way to make the pix money. Soon she got on a list of stag party "entertainers." It was just like back home—instead of a barn full of boys, there was a room full of rich men.

At one of these stags she met a girl who put her wise to the commuter bit. "We'll hit the jackpot kid!" the girl told Eunice. "People from all over the country are flocking here. So many new ones are coming in that California is going to get more seats in Congress—can you imagine that, honey!"

Eunice didn't need much persuasion—she became a C-Girl in the late afternoons, still trying for the movies in the morning. The mornings she was able to drag herself out of bed, that is.

And it was in a commuter bar in L. A. that she met Roger M., an oil company engineer, happily married—but always on the lookout for that extra dash of spice. In Eunice he saw that spice. He'd been noticing more and more beautiful girls hanging around the bar, but he hadn't paid much attention to them—until he spotted Eunice. She was bending low in her low-neckline dress, adjusting the heel strap on her shoe.

She looked up, still leaning forward, and smiled at him. After that matters progressed famously—until Eunice said:

"There's a slight business detail we have to take care of—first."

He stared at her. "Money?"

"You latch on fast, Roger."

"But I thought that if we liked each other we could—"

Eunice shook her head. "Like isn't good enough—for free." She pursed her lips reflectively—"Love—yes." Then she shrugged. "Maybe we'll

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come to that. Meanwhile—my price is fifty."

When he nodded, she opened her bag and handed him a hat check with a number stamped on it. She said, "Give this to the attendant in the little boy's room. Pay him twenty-five and he'll show you a side door. Go in and up the stairs—I'll meet you there."

She did. And in the room she left him to his own devices while she went into an adjoining room. Minutes later she came back, wearing only a short jacket that didn't quite reach her hips. She held a deck of cards in her hand.

Eunice gave the cards to Roger, saying: "Shuffle and fan them out, face down. I'll draw one."

Roger had seen a deck of cards like this once before. Suddenly all thumbs, he shuffled clumsily, then fanned them out.

Eunice selected one, turned it over, and shook her head with mock sad-

ness. "I always make it rough on myself," she sighed . . .

Later, when Roger was ready to leave, she handed him a photo of herself. He stared at it. Never had he seen such unashamed, self-debasing pornography! In the instant that he paused there to stare at it, he wondered how anybody could stoop to such depths. Then he shrugged.

"Show it to your commuter friends. I'm here every day except Saturday and Sunday. So long, lover boy!" She closed the door after him . . .

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TORTURES OF THE DAMNED (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

meant a plunge to the canyon floor hundreds of feet below. The firs grew tall on that floor, but from where I sat they looked like toy Christmas trees! I was more scared than I liked to admit.

It didn't seem to bother Consuelo, though. She had been born and raised in this country, and talked and chatted. But I noticed she never once took her eyes off the road—on the real ticklish spots, she was dead silent.

After a few miles, the cliff evened out on both sides. Soon we were riding on the *mesa*, the flat table land. Flat, that is, compared to what went before. There were still plenty of dips and curves. The trail didn't improve any, though, and I wondered when a car had been over it last.

The first stop would be to look over some old Indian ruins. That's where we would eat, and it wasn't too far from that adobe. It was a perfect set-up for what I had in mind.

Now that the driving was easier, Consuelo turned to me. "I just remembered," she said, "this is the week before Easter. Maybe we'll see some *Penitentes*."

"*Penitentes*?" The word sounded familiar, but I wasn't sure. "What's that?" I asked.

Consuelo explained patiently, answering all of my many curious questions. The Brotherhood of the Penitents was an old sect, and some said it dated back to the *Conquistadores*. They believed their sins were too great for ordinary forms of penance, and for this reason inflicted cruel punishment on themselves.

The initiation ritual for new members was the beginning, but only the beginning. The night before Ash Wednesday, the would-be *Penitente* comes to the *morada*, the adobe chapel where the members of the Society are waiting. The novice knocks on the door, and is finally

admitted after a ritual of questions and answers.

The room is in shadows, lit with the feeble light of candles. The Brothers sit in the semi-darkness. The initiate is led to the center of the floor, strips to the waist and kneels. Now comes the *sangrador*, the bloodletter. He holds a piece of sharp flint in his hand. Quickly, expertly, he makes three parallel slashes down the back, and three more slashes across it. Thin red lines of blood trickle from the cuts.

Consuelo continued: "The marks of the *sangrador* are not for the penance, but to let the blood flow so the whips leave no welts."

I swallowed hard. "Whips?" She explained quickly. After the cuts are made the novice calls for the lash. The *sangrador* steps forward again, braided rawhide whip in hand. It whistles through the air!

The stinging leather comes down on the bare back like a striking snake, leaving a long, ugly red bite. The novice suppresses a groan and steels himself for the next blow, and the next. Soon the fleshy target is a mass of angry red streams.

If he has had enough, the initiate signifies it and his ordeal is done. The torture is strictly voluntary, and no one is made to take more than he can stand. But if he feels the need of greater penance, he calls for more lashes according to the ritual, and the *sangrador* obliges. The whip grows soggy with blood, and the ground below is soon darkly-stained. If the penitent faints before the prescribed number of blows are given, there are no more strokes. When the ritual is over, his back is bathed in a healing solution.

EVERY YEAR, the week before Easter, the men of the Brotherhood punished themselves for their sins, in penitential processions. Sometimes

they would carry out their rituals at other times of the year, but the pre-Easter week saw the biggest ones. Their self-torture was harsh, fanatic, but they lived in a harsh land and led a bitter life. High among the mountain peaks, cut off from the rest of the world, they lived as their ancestors had for hundreds of years, herding sheep and scratching a living from the barren soil. They were a proud, determined people—a primitive people.

And like all such people they looked on strangers with suspicion. Their rites were strictly secret, and thrill-seekers were strongly resented. When the ritual began to attract more outsiders, the Brothers started wearing hoods. Later, when the countryside became infested with the alien gringos, with their circus side-show curiosity and prying cameras, the Society took measures to keep the place of the rites a dark secret.

The road became even rougher, and soon Consuelo was forced to stop the car. "Now we walk," she said. We took the food and blankets and set out across the mesa.

It was chilly there in the mountains. The sun shone brightly in the afternoon all right, but we were over 7,000 feet up and it was still only March. Even on foot, the going was rough, but Consuelo knew exactly where she was headed. We walked for about 15 minutes and came to another path.

"Soon we will be there," she said. I wasn't sorry to hear it—I had all the exercise I wanted and was about ready to chuck the whole thing for a bad try. To me the picnic idea was just a waste of time—I was more interested in a little adobe romance. But if I tried to hurry her, it might mess things up. The best way to handle it was to let events take their course.

We were close to the ruins when I heard it; a thin, eerie wailing note that pierced the clear air and the very marrow of my bones! It was a sound that made the hairs stand up on the back of my neck.

"What the devil was that?"

Consuelo stopped short and motioned me to silence. "El pito," she whispered, her eyes growing wide. "The fife. It is the Brothers!"

And then I heard them, the voices of men chanting. It was a dirge-like, gut-tightening chant, sad and desolate. The sound was heavy with the misery and sins of all the world.

"Quick!" Consuelo commanded sharply. She pushed me off the trail, behind some big rocks and tall, tangled bushes, and forced me to the ground. She lay down beside me.

"Don't move," she warned. "For the love of the Saints, pray they do not see us!"

I started to ask her something, but she clapped a warm hand over my mouth. "Be silent," she hissed angrily, "you fool!"

Then, from our hiding place, I saw them come around the bend. First

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was the leader, reading aloud in Spanish from a large book. Then came the man who was creating the soul-harrowing wail on the fife. And behind them—I had to blink my eyes!—were a group of half-naked men, clad only in sandals and white cotton pants. Their faces were covered by black hoods, and the first three had fiber whips in their hands.

They walked in step, almost militarily. Every few paces, each raised his whip over his shoulder and savagely lashed his own bare back. First over the right shoulder, then over the left. Over the right, then over the left. The slap of the braided fiber echoed in the chill air, ominously. They continued to chant, what doleful confession of sin I don't know. Blood saturated the whips, dripping from their backs and spreading in ghastly red stains on their white pants. It fell to the ground in dark, sickening drops. This was a procession of the *Penitentes*!

CONSUELO'S ARMS were around me, her hands digging into my chest. She pressed her tense body against me as though she were trying to burrow into me and hide!

My heart was beating wildly. We were almost close enough to reach out and touch them! Primitive men with primitive passions in the throes of a primitive ritual. If they discovered us now... spying...!

Consuelo was a native of this country and knew the kind of people they were—her own people. If she was scared for her life, there was plenty of reason to be scared! Ordinarily, they were good, simple people, only asking to be let alone to carry on their affairs in privacy. Any other time they would have invited us into their homes for food and a night's lodging. But now, it's grovel in the dirt and pray they don't find you, for if they do...

I hugged the ground.

The macabre parade went on. The next man was not bare above the waist, but wore a kind of vest. When he came nearer I saw what it was. Strips of cactus were braided across his shoulders, his back and over his chest. More of the thorn-studded strips were twined around his legs, from thighs to ankles. There must have been thousands of those thorns! Long, barbed, dagger-like, hard as steel and sharp as needles, each one pierced deep into his flesh, creating a hell of agony at every step. But he gave no sign of his terrible pain, marching in slow cadence with bowed head under black hood, hymning confession of his sins.

Another man followed, dragging a huge cross. The heavy timber bent him almost double and the crotch of the cross rested on his bare shoulder, pressing hard and mercilessly down on him. The shorter arm of the cross passed over his chest and the longer end trailed behind him on the ground. This man did not chant. His breath came in choked gasps as he

shuffled painfully along. Another penitent, fully dressed, unhooded, walked beside him as his *companionero*.

Then came the strangest, most blood-chilling sight of all—a penitent dragging a crude wooden wagon! A harness of horsehair over his shoulders and under his arms rubbed raw into his flesh. He groaned from his great effort as he pushed forward—like a beast of burden—to pull the dead weight of the cart. Dead weight, for the wheels did not move, did not turn on their axles. Dead weight, for this was the *carreta de muerte*, the cart of Death! The passenger it carried was no ordinary traveler. The passenger was Death!

Clothed all in black, a carving of a skeleton grinned out from under a ghastly black cowl. Its perpetual death grin was a mockery of all things living. In its bony fingers was a bow and arrow, the arrow poised against the taut bowstring! The cart jounced over the rough path, and the dread figure of the skeleton jostled with the movement, as though Death were alive. As the wagon approached with its grim load, it seemed for one frightful moment that the skeleton pointed the arrow straight at me, ready to take me in punishment for my intrusion!

SUDDENLY THERE was silence. The piping of the *pito* and the chanting of the penitents ceased. The grisly parade halted. The *Hermano Mayor*, the Chief Brother at the head of the procession, had given the signal for a brief rest. They had to rest occasionally, these self-torturing wretches, for even they could not endure the torments for too long a time.

The cross-bearer stopped directly opposite me. His *companionero* stepped forward to take the heavy weight of the wood on his own shoulders for an all too-brief rest. I saw his face—it was Ysidro!

He seemed to be looking straight at me and I froze in terror. Ysidro, that kind, mild man with the pail and mop and the gentle smile. Only now he had a much heavier burden, and he wasn't smiling. His eyes were blank, not focused on anything, for which I was grateful. They were turned in on himself and the contemplation of his sins. What terrible sins could these men have committed to make them torture themselves so?

Suddenly, it all came back to me, the vision of the tourist couple I had seen in the morgue a year ago! In a flash, I knew how they had died, beaten, crucified, their arms and legs nailed with railroad spikes to that same crude cross!

They, like we, had come across a troupe of *penitentes*. They had been seen. And they had paid for that moment of spying—cruelly and finally—with their lives.

They rested for a minute or so, and Consuelo clutched me tighter. One move, one sound, that was all we needed.

The leader gave the signal to start

again. Ysidro stepped out from under the cross and the *Penitente* resumed his awful load. Once more the flagellants swung their wicked yucca whips—once more I heard the bite of the lash against their torn, bloody backs. Once more the human beast of burden leaned into his horsehair harness and took up his dreadful march, with Death riding behind him.

The sinners started their chant and the agonizing wails of the *pito* played a tune of horror on my spine. They shuffled down the path. Long after they were gone from sight, the thin shrill of the fife and the sorrowful echoes of the chant lingered in the mountain air . . .

Consuelo and I lay there on the ground beside the trail for a long, long time. We were both too weak from fright to get up. My blood pulsed in my ears and my heart pounded as though it would burst from my chest. Then, little by little, we relaxed. Consuelo loosened her hold on me.

"Thank the saints," she moaned. "I will light a candle!"

I couldn't say anything.

The shadows grew long and the wind blew colder. It would be twilight soon, then night and that was no time to be navigating a car in the mountains. We got up to go back to the car, avoiding the dark wet spots congealing on the trail. We didn't say anything, but both of us knew the picnic would not be, and the *adobe* would remain deserted that night.

While we drove back to town, Consuelo soon relaxed altogether. It came to me that, after all, what we had seen was not entirely new to her.

"Do you know," she asked, "what they will do later on?" And she told me how on Good Friday, one of the Brotherhood would be tied tightly to a cross. He would stay there to the limit of his endurance, with the cords biting into him, cutting off circulation. The sun would beat down on him if it was sunny and the cold winds would go through him if it was windy. He would stay until he could take no more, or until he fainted. There were stories, she told me, of men in the old days who had been nailed to the wood.

I didn't even want to hear about it. Right now all I wanted was to get back to the Twentieth Century. I wanted to be in a place with lights, noise and people—people laughing and talking. And a couple of stiff shots wouldn't hurt either.

Consuelo prattled on. If I wanted, she said, maybe she could arrange for me to see another *Penitente* procession. Some groups were not so strict or fanatical, she added. They had these processions all week, and this time I wouldn't have to hide.

I shivered and didn't answer. While we drove through the shadows of gathering darkness, I kept looking into the rear view mirror. I kept seeing that ghostly figure of black-hooded Death pointing his drawn arrow—at me!

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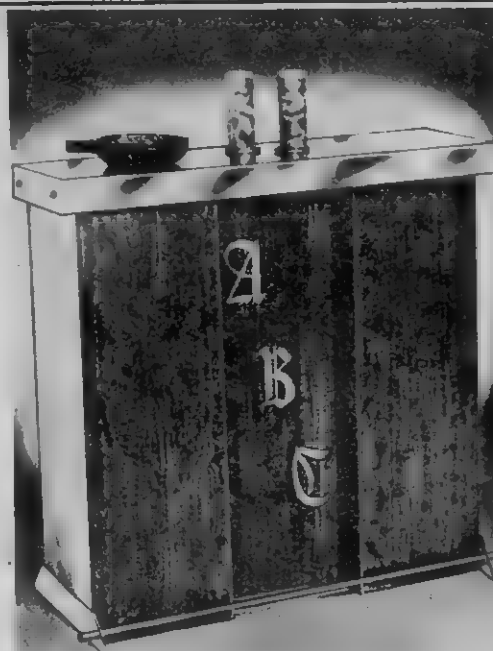
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RODEO COWBOY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33)

crippled so badly that they can't hold down a full-time job of any kind, let alone get back in the saddle again. Every year there are always those who have to drop out of the circuit with serious accidents, and others who come back after having been out for a year or more of recuperation and patching.

And what do they get for it? When it comes to money, only a bare percentage of all the rodeo cowboys have anything to show above expenses at the end of the tour! The great majority are losers, with those at the bottom going deeper into debt every year.

What about those who are seriously hurt and haven't any savings to fall back on? They're just plain S.O.L., brother! No rodeo cowboy can get accident insurance by himself, and the promoters have shown no initiative in arranging for a group set-up, which only they could do. Of course, the rates would be high, but they could well afford it in the best interests of the sport.

Jim Shoulders' prize-money take may sound big, but it's nothing spectacular when compared to that of other top men in big-time sports, such as baseball, football or hockey. And remember, too, that his forty-three thousand plus is a gross figure out of which, first of all, must come all his living and travel expenses during the entire season. For what else has to come out of it, we'll let Jim speak again. He calls rodeo riding the toughest racket in sport, and makes these points against it: "There's absolutely no guarantee. You've even got to furnish your own equipment, and you have to pay entry fees to compete. If you're hurt, you have to scuffle around for yourself."

Speaking of expenses, nothing is done to schedule the itinerary of the tour to make it easier for the contestants. The route zigzags around the country, with many long back-laps. The result is that a rider's travel expenses are increased greatly over what they would be if there were some geographical sequence to the bookings. For instance, last November the season ended with a grand finale in Harrisburg, Pa. Only a few weeks earlier, the cowboys all had to be out in San Francisco if they wanted to try for a piece of the prize money in that big event. The tour had already been in the East earlier in the season, so why the added expense of swinging back almost all the way across the country—particularly when a majority of the riders live in the West and would have to make the return trip home right after the show? Listening to the gripes in Harrisburg, we were reminded of what the wartime gas rationers were always asking: "Is this trip necessary?"

HOW DO THE VARIOUS events rate in order of frequency of accidents? As you might not expect, bronc rid-

ing comes ahead of bull riding in this department, although these two do head the list. First of all, a bucking horse is harder to stay on than a bull. His turns and motions are quicker and more powerful. A bull usually follows the same pattern in his efforts to dismount the burden on his back, while a good bronco seems to dream up ever-new and malicious ways of dumping his cargo. Certain rodeo horses have become infamous for the regularity with which they bounce riders into the dust, or onto the tanbark if it's an indoor event.

A good rodeo cowboy tries to study every horse he rides—although the eight frantic seconds he has to stay aboard doesn't allow much time for detailed research on the subject. Cowboys always watch other bronc riders in action, keeping a close eye on every movement of the horse, and the counter-movements of the cowboys in self-defense. Those slumping figures squatting on the fence or straddling the chute framing may seem to be drowsing, but the eyes shaded beneath their battered Stetsons are taking in every detail of the action. A good rodeo rider knows all that's possible to know about the regular mounts on the circuit—the rest he has to find out during the split second between the time the chute gate opens and his bronc starts orbiting.

A rodeo hand spends as much time looking over horse flesh as a millionaire stable owner at a thoroughbred auction; he studies the bulls as carefully as a methodical matador. He usually knows which bronc will play dead and then explode, which one will give him a good fishtailing ride, which bull will come out of the chute bucking or which one will plunge ahead for several yards and then start spinning. All these details can mean the difference between a serious injury and a minor one—or, if he's unusually lucky, none at all. Another thing he tries to figure out is the safest side of the animal which to slide off after his time is up—if he goes off before that, it doesn't matter for he has nothing to say about it.

The falls rider takes from his mount are bad enough and account for most of the injuries, but the worst of all rodeo rough-housing goes on after he has hit the ground, particularly if the animal he has been riding has a killer instinct. That's why the cowboys spend so much time planning just how they'll bail out. The direction in which a bronc normally spins has a lot to do with it, as well as how tight a circle he turns in and how he throws out his heels. Also, the way he uses his front hooves is important. With a bull, a lot depends on how far he runs before wheeling for the charge. There are some animals, both horses and bulls, who either have insensitive backs so that they don't realize their riders have left them, or become so interested in just bucking that they don't

fective or there is ■ tremendous overpressure . . ."

The *Sultana* had been built for the river trade and had sailed for two years without a sign of trouble. The history of the leaky boilers on her last trip is known, but under normal circumstances, probably nothing would have gone wrong. What caused the explosion aboard the *Sultana* was a set of circumstances that nobody could have foreseen: thousands of men, released from damnation, desperate to get home—careless or understandably humane officers—a ship captain who saw the feeble, decaying men clamber aboard and forgot the rules—a heavily overloaded ship forced to fire its leaking boilers until they burst. The night, the wind, the sick men, the wide and black river—these were the elements that fused together in ■ murderous holocaust.

The catastrophe received little attention. The mind of America was fixed on the end of one of the bloodiest wars in history. Hundreds of thousands of men were coming home. A new president, Andrew Johnson, was trying to follow a man who was already a legend, trying to rebuild ■ shattered country. The army was anxious not to publicize the accident, while the influential papers of the East paid little notice to the victims, most of whom were from the Middle West.

And there the affair ended. The bitter memory of the *Sultana* had to fight its way into the history books. Somewhere, walking the streets of Memphis the morning of the explosion and in the sad weeks afterward, were the soldiers who had missed the boat—and, almost certainly, death.

It's interesting to speculate what they thought in their drunken haze, as they watched the terrible scene on the river that day . . .

THE GHOST THAT FED ON HUMAN FLESH

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47)

gathering firewood at the fringe of the jungle near dusk, the day before, he had caught a fleeting glimpse of a "horrible black monster." It reared up out of the brush and dragged his screaming companion off into the forest!

I could think of no animal in the world that fitted the description given by the boy. Jack, Federico and I had already scoured the area from where the child had vanished, but in the leaf-matted floor of the jungle, it was impossible to make out any animal prints. Federico's guess seemed to be the most logical.

"A puma or tigre might look black to ■ scared *muchacho* in the shadows of evening," he said. "And they have been known to carry off children before . . ."

■ SUSPECTED THAT THE Indians were keeping something from us, some mysterious, primitive terror. In the

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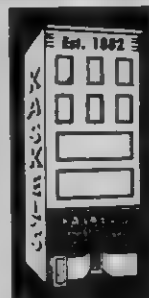
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depths of the jungle, untouched by the white man's science and civilization, were things that defied sanity and logic.

The chief spokesman of the Indians was the local *brujo* (witch-doctor), a wizened old man with dark, piercing eyes. His influence on the people was very great. Federico informed us that the man was also a *chaac*, a priest of the old Mayan religion which is still practiced in secret in many isolated jungle settlements. When I plied *brujo* with questions, he glared at me wordlessly, with the wild, haunted look of a man who knew of fearful things which no white man could comprehend.

"*Muhanamatz!*" the old man finally blurted, with a flourish of gaunt arms.

I started to grin. I had heard the crazy stories about *Muhanamatz*—a legendary ape-like monster with shaggy hair that walked like a man and lived in the deepest parts of the jungle. The stories spoke of his venturing out to drag people off to his lair, and rip them apart with his terrible claws. But something in the *brujo's* sudden, fierce scowl wiped the grin off my face.

"You may laugh, *senor*," he said in surprisingly fluent Spanish. "But I myself"—he tapped himself on the chest with a bony finger—"have seen *Muhanamatz* prowling through the jungle in the moonlight!"

A sudden chill seemed to move across the clearing. It was almost easy then—in that jungle-locked, lost-world setting, haunted by the ghosts of the ancient Mayas—to believe in the supernatural world reflected in the old priest's fierce eyes. With an effort, I shrugged the ominous feeling off and tapped my .38, then pointed to the shotguns.

"These," I said in Spanish, "will kill your *Muhanamatz*." The *brujo* shook his head solemnly, and I could see the doubting looks on the faces of several Indians around us.

"Your bullets will bounce off the monster," the witch-doctor said, "as if they were drops of rain!"

I felt sure that the Indians, restricted by their own taboos, had not made a real attempt to find the boy. Although they had accepted our offer to help look for the child, I got the impression they were certain it was hopeless . . . that the appearance of "*Muhanamatz*" was associated in some vague way with vengeance of the jungle gods. It was my plan to search the "forbidden area" which they had avoided . . .

WE SPENT THE NIGHT at the village. We didn't sleep—it was impossible. All through the long, ink-black hours, the steady beat of muffled drums blended with the whispered wailing of a hundred throats, deep in a prayer of hopelessness.

Once I went to the door of my hut. A hundred yards or more away, I could see the flicker of a tiny fire. Standing there, clearly outlined by the flame were two naked Indian

men. And then, even as I watched, I saw the *brujo* lift up a small suckling pig.

A woman rose. She was young, beautiful and also naked. Her pear-shaped breasts glistened in the firelight as if they had been painted with oil.

A knife flashed! The pig gave a squeal of pain as its belly was cut open. The knife flashed again, slicing along the dying animal's entrails.

Then the woman dipped her fingers in the filthy pulsating mess and drew it, wet, mysteriously across the foreheads of the two Indians.

The whispering prayer rose to a screaming violence! And then, suddenly it died away. The fire went out as if an eraser had been swept across a blackboard. In the darkness I heard the Indians, quietly as death, returning to their huts.

The next morning the *brujo* brought us our guides and wished us luck.

"I wish you well," he said to us. "We have done what we could, but all is in the hands of the Jungle Gods now. Taboo may not be broken without peril!" He turned and walked away without another word. He would not even look as we left the village!

We set out with *ponchos*, flashlights, emergency rations, machetes—and our guns. Rain was threatening as we crossed several maize patches and plunged into the tangled jungle.

About five miles from the settlement, the rain came down with a sudden, pelting roar. But I had no intention of turning back. We slipped into our *ponchos*.

The gloom of the jungle deepened into a twilight so heavy that we had to put our flashlights to frequent use.

We ploughed ahead for hours, peering through the rain, swinging our machetes incessantly at lianas that looped across the narrow track.

The rain was breaking through the tops of the giant hardwoods and palms in torrents as we came down a cohune ridge. The vicious mosquitoes, which clung to us in huge swarms, seemed to thrive on insect repellent.

Finally, the Indians led us off the beaten track onto the barest trace of a footpath. A hundred yards into the flat, the trail ended abruptly.

Looming through the forest ahead of us, were an irregular-shaped hill and a half-dozen symmetrical mounds—all covered with dense vegetation. The lead Indian jabbed his machete at a large thorn bush near us.

"Find cloth here," he said, the Spanish words laced with nervous fear.

THE LAND WAS COLD and empty. Strange whispers of wind played back and forth across the clearing, and even the rain seemed to have a different texture. It was clammy, more penetrating. In the murky light, I could feel my skin crawl. There was death in this place—black and terrible death in unnamed forms. It entered

our bodies and tried to grasp away our souls!

We searched for signs of animal prints, but could find nothing in the spongy mat of leaves. Gradually, we left the Indians behind and hacked our way deeper into the midst of the sacred earthen structures, which extended out of sight into the jungle.

We prowled around the place for nearly an hour, climbing over piles of sculptured stones and grotesquely carved figures buried under a lace-work of jungle growth. Finally, I swung in toward the hill formation near the center of the area.

Halfway up one side of the hill, I saw something. I waved Jack and Federico over.

"Looks like a cave," I said. "Let's take a look!"

We hacked our way up through the scrub until we leveled off on a narrow ledge and came to a dead-end. A jut of limestone rocks framed an opening some four feet high into the water-logged hillside.

A small stream of water trickled from the hole, across the ledge on which we stood. This, added to the solid downpour, had obliterated any animal prints that might have marked the shelf.

The rear wall of a rocky chamber sent back a reflected black glaze. Cupping a hand to my mouth, I yelled sharply.

With a roaring flap of wings, a stream of bats spewed from the cave, sending the three of us staggering out of the way! I shuddered. They were blood-sucking vampires, that could kill a man in a matter of minutes!

After Federico had tossed several small rocks into the cavern and we had waited, guns ready, for any further signs of life in the place, I wagged my hand at Jack.

"Give me the shotgun," I said, handing him my .38. "Wait out here in case anything goes wrong."

With flashlight in one hand, shotgun in the other, I dropped on my hands and knees into the rocky maw of the cave. I could hear Federico crawling along the watery passage behind me.

After several yards, we were able to stand upright inside a large rocky chamber. The slightly sloping floor was covered with an inky blanket of water.

Great, irregular limestone blocks protruded on all sides, and in a recess eroded out of the heavy formations, lay a black-shadowed jumble of huge boulders and criss-crossed slabs of rock. They had obviously tumbled into the cavern from the ceiling and walls. While Federico went probing along the left wall, I followed the fan of my own light along the opposite side toward the mass of fallen rock.

Suddenly I froze.

There, hours fresh, where a bulge of bare mud rose above the water, were two pad marks of a big cat!

The back of my neck tingled. I tightened my grip on the shotgun

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and slid my finger inside the trigger guard.

"Federico," I called softly without turning, "Look—"

I broke off, my mouth gone dry as cotton. A pungent animal smell was filling my nostrils.

Slowly, I lifted my light toward the pile of boulders. One of the formless black shadows moved!

STIFFENED, BRINGING THE shotgun waist-high and leveling the flashlight under and between the twin barrels.

I lost the moving shadow. Federico's light leapt across the cave as I slid toward the right wall, flashing my beam between the ragged blocks of stone.

Suddenly, a huge form loomed up behind upthrusts of rock like a great, shaggy monster! For one spine-chilling moment, I had the weird sensation of standing in the presence of *Muhanamatz* himself!

Twin dots of emerald fire blazed at me for a second, then slid out of sight. A ragged snarl echoed across the cavern. I stepped sideways—and my light froze on the only black jaguar I have ever seen!

I jerked the shotgun up, scrambling on the muddy floor for solid footing. But the great cat-eyes were already soaring toward me as I fired!

I heard Federico yell as my gun exploded. The cat screamed in mid-air! I saw him slew sideways. Then I was going over backward, my flashlight and gun smashed from my hands. A black mass of squalling fury that seemed to fill the whole cave was ripping me to shreds!

Instinctively, I grabbed the raging animal by the throat. I crowded in between his slashing front paws and thrust upward with both knees, trying to keep those awful claws from my guts long enough to reach my machete or give Federico a chance to get at the cat.

It was like fighting twin buzzsaws! Claws tore along both sides of my body...

I was vaguely conscious of Federico's light sliding toward me. A blurred silhouette darted in close, shoving the shotgun forward.

Before the *mestizo* could fire, without hitting me, the jaguar's left paw swiped sideways.

Federico screamed!

I heard water splash as he sprawled backward, leaving the cave in a weird half-light thrown by the slanting reflection of our flashlights from the water-covered floor. I dug my fingers into the cat's throat, trying to cut off his wind and keeping those long white fangs from my face.

We rolled completely over and I was under the *tigre* again! The claws were like a dozen knives slicing my body to ribbons. Raging fire tore through my chest and white-hot pain sent a flash of dizziness across my brain. Claws ripped across my head, down my neck. Blood streamed into one eye. A light was leaping around the cave and I knew that Federico

was trying to get at the cat once more.

Frantically, I twisted under the screaming animal, bunched my fading strength, and kicked outward with both booted feet.

The *tigre* skittered backward for a fleeting moment. But in the half-second that he was off-balance, I was on my knees, machete in my hands. With a hideous snarl, the cat came at me again.

The fetid stink of his breath slapped my face. I was conscious of green eyes of hate, glistening fangs. An unseen paw reached out and laid my left shoulder open in the very moment that I drove the machete forward with all my strength!

I felt the big knife sink solidly into the cat's chest—but I was already being slammed backward, pinned once more under the raging black beast...

A crazed squall filled the cave. The *tigre* slumped slightly, then the claws were digging at my sides again, ripping down my bunched legs. I tried to pull the machete back and found it stuck tight!

"This is how I die," I thought wildly.

Then, abruptly, the jaguar gave a gurgling groan and went limp. The machete handle thudded into my chest as the heavy weight of the cat sagged against me and slid partly to one side. I shoved the dead weight of the hindquarters off my legs and scrambled painfully to my feet—in time to see Federico thrust his own jungle knife through the *tigre's* neck!

I heard Jack Michael swear as he came crawling into the cave. I felt a stir of anger at his delay, until I realized the whole thing had happened in bare seconds.

I tried a laugh when he looked at me open-mouthed, but it didn't quite come off. I was a mess, that was sure. Both shoulders and arms, one side of my head and neck, my thighs and shins and chest were laced with bad cuts. I figured my shot had slowed the cat more than a little—and the claw-shredded rubber *poncho* had probably saved me from a worse fate.

Federico's wounds consisted only of a slash of claw-marks where the jaguar had slapped him across the chest. I was fisting my claw-torn Panama from the floor when he called out from the back of the cave.

In a lair behind the pile of fallen rocks, among a scattering of animal bones, the *mestizo* had made a grisly discovery—small human bones with bits of flesh still on them, and telltale pieces of a child's clothing.

We dragged the jaguar outside and slit his belly open. In his stomach we found the conclusive evidence of human hair and more balled-up scraps of cloth. Standing there in the slanting rain, I stared down at the lifeless body of *el tigre negro*.

"Maybe he's not *Muhanamatz*," I said hoarsely. "But this black bastard will fill the bill until a real monster comes along!"

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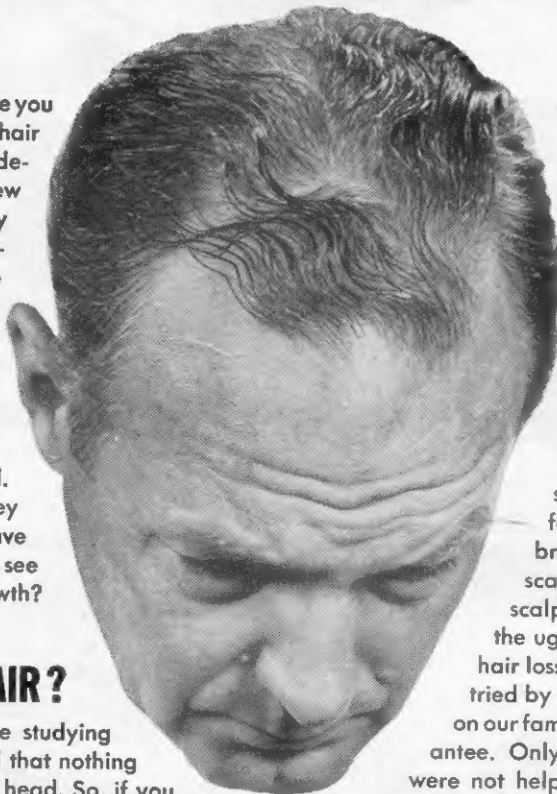
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